

*KA PU TE RUHA, KA HAO TE RANGATAHI: CHANGES IN MAORI WARFARE
BETWEEN THE PERIOD PRIOR TO FIRST EUROPEAN CONTACT
AND THE END OF THE NEW ZEALAND WARS.*

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Military History

by
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

KA PU TE RUHA, KA HAO TE RANGATAHI: CHANGES IN MAORI WARFARE BETWEEN THE PERIOD PRIOR TO FIRST EUROPEAN CONTACT AND THE END OF THE NEW ZEALAND WARS, by Major Terence Johanson, 107 pages.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Geoffrey Parker asserts in *The Cambridge History of Warfare* that the “Western Way of War” is based on five fundamental principles. They are: the combination of, a heavy reliance on technology, reinforced by discipline and aggressive pursuit of total victory, supported by economic power and the ability to implement change, permitted military dominance over indigenous peoples ill prepared to withstand the destructive forces arrayed against them.¹ The paradigm that an ‘uncivilized’ native culture is not able to understand and effectively engage a superior western force is a bias that in many ways remains today. History has shown that this is not necessarily a valid mental model and the New Zealand Wars of the 19th century were an example of this. During these wars the indigenous people of New Zealand, the Maori, fought a series of conflicts against a force of up to a division of the technologically superior British and Colonial military forces between 1843 and 1872 in which neither side achieved outright victory.

The Maori migrated to New Zealand from an unknown origin during the period 1200 to 1350 AD and settled the land in several separate groups. These groups maintained a strong individual identity and bond of kinship, which often led to open conflict between different clans. In Maoridom, an individual’s principal loyalty was to the *hapu* or sub-tribe and any threat to this group, either physically or socially was to be eliminated. To support this philosophy, Maori society maintained a powerful warrior culture and martial skill was revered with highly proficient warriors holding an elite status within the tribe. The discovery and settlement of New Zealand by Europeans initially had little effect on the causes of warfare between the Maori tribes despite the

introduction of the musket, which significantly influenced the tactics employed on the battlefield. As the friction between European and Maori increased due to rapid settler expansion from 1840 onwards, the colonial government requested military assistance to deal with the rising tensions. The primitive Maori's ability to incorporate new technology and develop strategies to negate the British regular forces strength, may provide valuable insight into the evolving nature of adversary facing western forces in the Middle East today.

This paper will investigate the changes in Maori warfare from the period of first European contact to the end of the New Zealand Wars. The examination will be conducted from a military perspective, and seek to use Parker's principles of the Western Way of War as a basis for the comparison of two different military systems at war.

To examine this, the body of the paper will consist of five chapters. This introduction will be followed by the second chapter that will discuss the Maori art of war prior to contact with the explorers, whalers and sealers who were the first Europeans to reside at length in New Zealand. After a background of the Maori arrival in New Zealand and the establishment of their culture, the chapter will discuss the reasons for warfare in Maori society prior to contact with Europeans and the tactics and weaponry Maori used to conduct warfare at this time. Chapter Three will examine the impact of the initial European contact on Maori warfare. It discusses the changes that occurred in the reasons for, and modes of, Maori warfare in the post-European contact period and the factors that precipitated to these changes. The medium for this will be the early 1800s inter-tribal conflicts known as the 'Musket Wars'. The fourth chapter will discuss the New Zealand wars and the adaptations the Maori made over the conflict's duration. It will discuss the

Maori reaction to engaging a western army and the tactics they adopted to mitigate the British technological advantage. The final chapter will provide an analysis of the Maori conduct of war and the effectiveness of their adaptations to the new technologies and tactics used against them.

The majority of historical literature on the subject of Maori warfare has been produced by non-Maori sources. European missionaries, soldiers and settlers who immigrated to New Zealand wrote early accounts of Maori lifestyle and custom. This trend continued throughout the nineteenth century and into the early part of the twentieth century. The historical accounts of the New Zealand wars are almost exclusively of the colonial government and British military perspective. During the 1970s, a Maori cultural renaissance led to questioning of earlier scholarly works on the New Zealand native culture because, it was asserted, the European authors maintained an inherent bias and therefore could not produce objective accounts. Author Angela Ballara contends that this was due to the requirement to “westernize” Maori concepts or rituals that did not directly correspond to European practices in order to enhance the Victorian audiences understanding.² She argues that European scholars exaggerated the bloodthirstiness and savagery of early Maori warfare and inflated casualty numbers and effects of the battles.³

Peter Belich proposed in his revisionist book, *The Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict: The Maori, The British and the New Zealand wars* that Victorian researchers had systemic preconceptions about native cultures and British superiority that led them to publish works that supported these ideas rather than record a true history. He acknowledges that these prejudices were unconscious and a result of the societal influences in the authors’ upbringing.⁴

The belief that this Victorian bias influenced the population's understanding of the New Zealand wars history was due to the fact that the early reports and recordings provided only one protagonist's viewpoint of the conflict. Modern New Zealand academicians believed that the British expectation of victory over the uncivilized natives left colonial recorders of the conflict ill prepared to comprehend effective Maori military resistance let alone success. Belich and Ballara assert Victorian reporting of the war downplayed native victories and invented British successes to reinforce the superiority of the crown. They present that the European monopoly of a written language created a history of Maori warfare that is inherently biased by Victorian misconception. Later New Zealand scholars such as Elsdon Best, James Cowan, Belich, Ballara and Michael King were received less critically by the Maori and appeared to present more balanced views regarding their conflicts with British. These authors, however, were all academicians with no formal background in the art of war. Their study and analysis of Maori strategies and tactics must therefore be questioned despite the authors' best intentions to present valid arguments.

The Maori culture did not traditionally possess a written language; however, did maintain oral and visual traditions to record tribal history. The tribe based itself around the *wharenui*, or meeting house. This building was the centerpiece for all village events from the welcoming of visitors and meetings of significance through to funerals of tribal members. The tribe's history was also centered on the meeting house. Elaborate carvings and woven panels portraying key events and personages and recitations of tribal history were featured here. Maori prized oratory skills almost as highly as martial prowess. The village elders' primary role of was to pass tribal knowledge to younger members, which

was generally conducted orally through stories and proverbs. Pre-European Maori maintained learned experts for holding and distributing the knowledge essential to the tribe.⁵ The most revered of these were the *tohunga ahurewa* who maintained the genealogy, oral tradition, astronomical and spiritual wisdom of the tribe.⁶

The problem with using oral tradition for primary sources is the recorder's selectivity. Minor disputes such as skirmishes or raids may have been deemed too regular an occurrence and often did not figure in Maori accounts.⁷ Tribal histories recorded only large-scale military operations or reciprocal raids that escalated into violence, which promoted the European belief in the Maori lust for war.⁸ When the first tribal histories began to be recorded, it was done by European missionaries who may have possessed the biases discussed in the previous paragraph or whose translation may not accurately represent the meaning of the words being conveyed. Although Maori who had learned to write completed later accounts, these works were often produced at a much later date than the events being described and themselves may have been exaggerated and embellished.⁹ Many of these works were also produced at the request of interested European parties who often did not accept the manuscripts in their raw state. These well-meaning individuals would edit, rewrite or change the works to enhance their clarity.¹⁰

Modern Maori revisionist academics on the Maori art of war tend to present a viewpoint diametrically opposed to the accepted histories compiled by Victorian authors. This may indicate an agenda to discredit previous works because of a difference of opinion. The presence of biases in Maori authored works creates a confusing position for a reader of New Zealand history to gain a true understanding of the New Zealand wars. Criticism of previous works on Maori warfare has been in the credibility of the authors'

examination of the effectiveness of Maori military operations. I believe that scholars conduct cultural analysis through a socio-political viewpoint and do not possess sufficient understanding of the art of war to objectively assess the quality of Maori military prowess. The investigation in this paper focuses on exploring the evolution of Maori warfare from a military perspective.

As a New Zealander of neither British or Maori descent, the motivation for examining this subject is to identify the reasons Maori changed the way they conducted warfare and how effective those changes were in conflict against a technologically superior ‘western’ army. Additionally, as a military officer my interest lies in analyzing the validity of Maori military innovation and adaption as well as exploring the ability of a primitive force to offset the technological superiority of their opponent to force a war on their terms. Maori quickly identified the advantages that the new technologies introduced by European contact and incorporated them into their way of war. Actively supported by European traders, they continued to modify and adapt their use of these new weapons and modes of transport to conduct inter-tribal warfare on a previously unimagined scope. The manner in which the later Maori fought an effective guerilla war against a division of British and colonial troops is testament to the ability of a primitive culture to readily adopt technology and employ it effectively against the culture that introduced it to them. The lessons from this conflict have parallels with today’s conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan where insurgent forces are effectively employing ‘western’ technology against the digitized, situational aware forces of the coalition.

¹Geoffery Parker, *The Cambridge History of Warfare* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-11.

²Angela Ballara, *Taua: 'Musket wars,' land wars' or tikanga?* (Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin Books (NZ) Limited, 2003), 37.

³*Ibid.*, 42.

⁴James Belich, *The Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict: The Maori, The British and the New Zealand wars* (Auckland, New Zealand: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 321-329.

⁵Rāwiri Taonui. 'Tribal organisation', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/NewZealanders/MaoriNewZealanders/TribalOrganisation/en> (accessed 18-November 2008).

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Ballara, *Taua.*, 104.

⁸*Ibid.*, 105.

⁹*Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

CHAPTER 2

MAORI WARFARE IN THE PERIOD PRIOR TO FIRST EUROPEAN CONTACT

Background

The Maori are the indigenous people of New Zealand. The oral, or “canoe”, traditions describe the arrival in New Zealand of Maori ancestors from a place most often called Hawaiki.¹ These orations also refer to the construction of large oceangoing canoes (*waka*), conflicts before departure, voyaging at sea, landing, inland and coastal exploration, and the establishment of settlements in new regions.² Significant scientific research including radiocarbon dating and analysis of mitochondrial DNA, locates the point of origin of the Maori migration as East Polynesia – likely the southern Cook and Society Island region.³ The voyage to New Zealand is understood to have been completed by small groups of *waka* that migrated deliberately, from different places, at different times during the period 1200 to 1350 AD.⁴ The canoe traditions of seven of these *waka* remain today and served to form the origins of the Maori tribal organization.⁵ Maori take great pride in being able to trace their ancestry back to the descendant who arrived on one of the seven canoes and it may be equated with ‘coming over on the *Mayflower*’ in the United States.⁶ Even today when Maori formally introduce themselves, identifying the canoe of their ancestors is an essential element of this oration.

The early Maori settlers chose to identify themselves with the vessel on which their ancestor arrived from Hawaiki. The Maori were never unified as one people. Rather, the Maori people were dispersed throughout New Zealand in tribal groupings known as *iwi*. The geographical area in which the *iwi* were based originated from the landing site of their founding *waka*. The *iwi* was the largest socio-political group in Maori culture and

consisted of several related clan groups or *hapu* who would act together to defend their territory from external threats.⁷ The most significant grouping in pre-European Maori society was the *hapu*.⁸ The size of *hapu* ranged from one hundred to several hundred members that included a number of extended family groups.⁹ A *hapu* controlled a defined area of tribal territory usually with access to food and forest resources. The group's primary political function was the protection of these commodities exclusive use for the tribe.¹⁰ *Hapu* often existed as isolated colonies dispersed over a large area and intermingled with groups from different *iwi*.¹¹ This pattern of settlement and resource management heightened instances of conflicting claims on the land, which if left unresolved could lead to conflict.¹² A *hapu*'s viability was measured by its ability to defend its land.¹³ A greater reliance on each other for the survival of the group created societal values that strove towards strengthening and sustaining the community.¹⁴

Individuals were viewed as an essential part of the group and there was strong belief in 'what affects a part also affects the whole'¹⁵. Clan members cooperated in food gathering, land cultivation, and the construction of fortifications, canoes and communal buildings.¹⁶ These values formed the foundation of the Maori belief in placing their greatest loyalty to the *hapu*. These groups remained immersed in their own communities and isolated from each other for centuries. Only after the arrival of Europeans was the collective term *Maori*, meaning original people, used to distinguish them from the *Pakeha*, or white people.¹⁷

Maori oral tradition records some instances of exploration by individuals during the early settlement of New Zealand and it is generally accepted that the entire country had been investigated by end of the fourteenth century.¹⁸ Initial settlement occurred close

to original landing sites in harbors or river mouths.¹⁹ This enabled Maori to continue to practice familiar food gathering techniques such as fishing and shellfish collection as well as hunting new species like seal and the large, flightless bird, the *Moa*.²⁰ The Maori developed horticulture and succeeded in establishing several plants including taro, yam and most importantly *kumara*, a variety of sweet potato that became an essential part of their diet.²¹ As the size of the groups increased, the greater demand for resources led expansion inland. This caused the Maori to transition from a predominantly maritime culture to one reliant on the forest for resources and food.²²

Early settlements were small, undefended villages of one or more habitations. These villages were known as *kainga* and were centered around the meeting house, or *wharehau*. They also contained food storehouses and a communal food preparation area. *Kainga* were normally sited in sheltered locations with food and resources in close proximity. The *kainga* became larger over time and the tribes began to fortify them as tensions rose over access to areas with abundant food resources. They continued to evolve into fortified villages known as *Pa*, which included ditches, earthen banks and palisades and were tactically sited to enhance defense. Fortified *Pa* will be discussed in more detail later in this paper.

Maori social structure was governed by the principle of hereditary chieftainship. Common born individuals possessing an outstanding ability or efficiency in an activity important to tribal life could balance this inherited authority. This created a communal leadership where initiatives of the chief would require endorsement of the tribe before they were pursued. Tribal leadership was a coordinating element that stabilized conduct and provided order and industry. The physical leadership was supplemented in its

moderation of tribal behavior by an intricate system of spiritual prohibition or sacredness known as *tapu*. No aspect of Maori life was without religious and supernatural obligations. Maori viewed themselves a part of nature and maintained a relationship with the natural world by managing natural resources through a strict system of *tapu* and *mana* (spiritual authority) that was administered by *tohunga* (priests).²³ *Mana* is not a concept that is easily defined in western terms however it was arguably the most important element of Maori culture.

Mana

Maori believed that *mana*²⁴ was the power of the supreme being of their universe, *Atua*.²⁵ They believed that this essence could be present in people, weapons and land that possessed the spirits of famous men.²⁶ In humans, it was inherited at birth in ruling families and the potency of the power was proportional to the seniority of the line.²⁷ This chiefly *mana* was the authority delegated by *Atua* to his human representative to execute his will on earth.²⁸ The key tenet of this belief is that the man is the agent of *mana* not the source. *Mana* was not exclusive to people of noble birth and could be attained by anyone who displayed desirable qualities or through the performance of outstanding deeds. Maori believed that all members of a tribe influenced the group's *mana* and all aspects of life affected the maintenance and enhancement of this essence. Success in battle, good luck, genius, great courage, daring and good fortune were characteristics that could strengthen the tribe's *mana*. As easily as it could be enhanced so to could *mana* be lost. Loss of land or resources, defeat in battle and failure to avenge a slight or insult to the group would cause a spiritual weakening. Individuals and groups possessing significant *mana* were

very protective of their status and would often act against any slight, real or perceived, to ensure its preservation.

Inter-tribal warfare was a significant element of Maori culture prior to first European contact. A career as a successful warrior was the natural path for the majority of Maori males.²⁹ At birth, all mothers and children were considered *tapu* and kept separated from the remainder of the village. Five days after birth a male child was dedicated to Tumatauenga, the god of war, in ceremony that involved the village *tohunga* (priest) taking the child to a stream or pool near the village, the *wai tapu*, that had been declared sacred for the purposes of conducting the spiritual observances for the *hapu*.³⁰ The priest would baptize the child in a ceremony known as *tu-ora*. The purpose of this ‘baptism’ was to endow the child with strength, vitality, cunning and physical and mental energy, the traits to succeed at the conduct the ways of war.³¹ The rites not only lifted the *tapu* that all children are born under but dedicated the child to the service of the tribe and more importantly to the god of war.³² All hapu members conducted the primitive economic activities of the time and the roles of priest or artist were ordained through the display of natural talent in these fields.³³ Without skill in these areas or the advantage of noble birth, the only option for male children of commoners or slaves to advance their station was to exhibit prowess in the martial arts.

Young men attended a school of arms known as para-whakawai.³⁴ The prospective warriors were instructed in the use of Maori weaponry and trained to proficiency in the guards, parries, thrusts and strikes essential to combat.³⁵ This study was conducted under the tutelage of elder, experienced warrior or toa known as *Ika-a-Whiro*, who used sparring with padded weapons and wrestling to confirm knowledge and build

strength.³⁶ Seasoned warriors would be used to demonstrate the different weapon drills, or *ahi*, to the apprentices so that they may imitate, practice and acquire the skills for themselves.³⁷ Mock battles would be used to evaluate students' retention of the rituals and arts of war.³⁸ The exercises composed of two opposing forces that covered the entire scope of battle from the performance of the pre-combat challenges and single combats through to conflict between the main bodies.³⁹ During these 'battles' the *Ika-a-Whiro* would observe and evaluate the trainees to identify those who were more proficient and record any breaches of the rules of war, protocol or mistakes.⁴⁰ Warfare was the most tangible activity in which a Maori male could achieve distinction and enhance his individual *mana*.⁴¹

Take

The predominant *take* or reasons for warfare amongst the Maori of pre-European New Zealand were land and *mana*.⁴² The former was the result of the territorial expansion necessary to support the increasing population. Possession of the land was not the focus for hostilities, access to the resources of the area were the true objective. As the Maori population grew and tribes became tied to the land, pressure on resources for the provision of food and tools increased the occurrences of inter-tribal conflict.⁴³ As *hapu* grew larger, the resources in the location they inhabited would be insufficient to support their numbers. It may seek to alleviate this by expanding their territory by invading the land of an unrelated neighboring tribe. Another option was for groups to fracture from the main clan and form their own *hapu*.

The new group would then migrate to an area that possessed sufficient resources for their subsistence. These migrations often attempted to occupy land already in the

possession of another tribe. Both of the options discussed created a ripple effect of conflict between the tribes. The vanquished in these battles would be forced from the area into another, which often caused hostilities to be commenced against another clan group. Land seizure considered sacred or containing desirable resources could also affect the prestige of a tribe thereby bringing in the second major cause of war, *mana*.

The Maori did not possess any sort of supreme judicial system; questions of status and authority were resolved on the battlefield.⁴⁴ As discussed earlier in this paper, *mana* was the spiritual essence of the tribe or *hapu*. A group or individual could enhance or lose *mana* through action or inaction. The preservation of the spiritual strength of the group was of the prime importance to early Maori and the consequences of not addressing an offence often made war inevitable. As individual *mana* was seen to contribute to that of the *hapu*, the group was expected to assist in restoring the balance for insults against its members.

Take could range from insulting words, gestures and songs through to petty theft of insignificant items to the desecration of sacred sites, objects or protocols.⁴⁵ Murder, theft, rape, adultery, abduction and other crimes were some of the acts demanded 'satisfaction'. *Makutu* (cursing – death or injury using the powers of the occult) or *kai pirau* (the exhumation and consumption of a buried corpse) were more unique transgressions.⁴⁶ For an aggrieved party to feel atoned, a repayment of sufficient value would be required from the offending group. Disputes could be resolved through non-combative means such as a gift of land, food offering or mutually acceptable marriage however; most commonly the concept of *utu* was pursued.

Utu primarily means repayment, restoration or reward.⁴⁷ In most cases, the compensation was sought directly from the offender however, if the perpetrator was a blood relative it could be attained from a non-kin neighbor or enemy. *Utu* was executed through the formation of a *taua muru*, a hostile operation into the enemy's territory to exact payment for an offense through the pillaging and destruction of property. Unlike the *ope taua*, or war party, the objective of the force was not to annihilate the opposing group but to inflict sufficient damage so as to balance out the initial misdemeanor. Any killing that occurred was limited to one to two persons, usually slaves.

A *taua muru* resembled other types of war party with the weapons and equipment they carried and their overt displays of aggression.⁴⁸ This was done to ensure the enemy was left in no doubt that they had transgressed against the visiting party and that the *taua muru* was capable of engaging in full combat operations, should compensation be denied. As with many aspects of pre-contact Maori life, *taua muru* were governed by a set of rules known by all.

If a group or one of its members acknowledged responsibility for an affront, and a *taua muru* had been declared through either formal message or rumor; the anticipated course of action was not to resist the activity.⁴⁹ The offending party often prepared gifts and banquets prior to the war party's arrival in order to alleviate their anger in a way that both groups believed that payment had been made and their respective *mana* enhanced. In many instances, the non-violent intent of a *taua muru* failed and the activity deteriorated into war.⁵⁰

The Maori had no recognized scale for the conduct of a *taua muru* to limit the extent of retribution. As with all matters involving pride, the 'victim' of a *taua muru*

would believe the restitution exacted was greater than the original offence and would deem it appropriate to conduct a like operation to restore the balance. This created a self-perpetuating cycle of warfare in which tribal groups became enmeshed. *Utu* has also been interpreted as revenge or blood vengeance. This may be reflective of social bias of European observers unable to comprehend the variance of levels of recompense required for different offences. Significant transgressions such as *kai pirau*, *makutu*, desecration of the bones of the dead or murder, demanded nothing less than the spilling of blood. A force dedicated to attaining blood vengeance for injuries received was called *taua toto* and to avenge an offence in this manner was known as *piki toto*.⁵¹ Subjects of *piki toto* were sworn enemy and the object of enduring hatred.⁵² The expression *purapura ora* means the ‘living seed’ and referred to the responsibility of a father’s children or descendants to avenge his death should he be slain by sorcery or murder.⁵³ This responsibility also applied to the fulfilling of debts outstanding at the time of his death.

Maori exercised extreme patience in exacting repayment for an insult against their clan.⁵⁴ The following comment made by a Maori to an early European writer emphasizes this:

Never trust a Maori; do not let a native walk behind you when travelling; do not even trust me, your friend; for some day I may remember that I have suffered at the hands of your ancestors or race and so take the earliest opportunity of killing you.⁵⁵

If a tribe experienced a severe defeat in battle and were unable to fight again, they would withdraw to an isolated area in order to regenerate their combat power. They would focus all time and resources on breeding and training a new military force, remaining hidden for a generation or more. Once desirable strength had been attained, the group would attack their former conquerors with the intent of reversing the previous result and

restoring their *mana*.⁵⁶ The maintenance between the tribes of ‘debit and credit account’ of *utu* was the primary cause of Maori warfare.⁵⁷ Tribal leadership and members of the *hapu* decided on war after careful consideration of insults, real or perceived, and points of honor in an attitude that resembled the European aristocracy’s dueling code.⁵⁸

The Road to War

Despite the apparent ease with which pre-European Maori found reasons to conduct warfare, the decision to commit men and resources to a military operation was a deliberate, thoroughly debated process. Distance from home base, number of groups involved and strength of the enemy added to the complexity of addressing the offense. These factors also affected the amount of consideration and planning that was conducted and the manner in which restitution would be sought. As identified earlier, Maori relied on all members of the *hapu* to contribute to the subsistence of the community therefore; the potential negative consequences of committing a force to a military campaign dictated this was a carefully weighed decision.⁵⁹

Deliberation was completed through a series of meetings, or *hui*, where the leadership of the injured party and their allies would discuss the most appropriate means for seeking *utu*. Maori had other non-violent methods for achieving satisfaction that are beyond the scope of this paper. However most disputes were settled by physical conflict. During these debates, the *take* was raised and the scope of retribution decided upon whether the offense required a full *ope taua* or the less violent *taua muru*. The discussion would determine the necessity for alliances, limitations upon the damage inflicted including the intended number of enemy casualties and restrictions on the killing of high-ranking individuals. Maori considered these restraints necessary to allow peace to be

established post conflict. These *Hui* were often incorporated into spiritually significant events such as *hakari* (reciprocal harvest feasts between *hapu*) to make use of the heightened emotions of tribe members to gather support for the cause. Potential allies were courted through feasts, gifts and at times, free rein to plunder the enemy without adherence to the limitations imposed on the other members of the war party.⁶⁰

The cultivation of alliances with non-related groups, particularly those a significant distance away, required a considerable amount of forward planning. The planting and harvesting of additional crops was required in the season before the campaign to provide the *hapu* the ability to entice allies to join the operation through feasts or bribery.⁶¹ Allies with kinship ties were treated less favorably and often coerced through threats of *taua muru* or emotional pleas on family loyalty. Refusal to respond to a request for support to a war expedition was perceived as an offense requiring significant punitive measures.⁶² Building of alliances was a prolonged process conducted by messengers moving backwards and forwards between groups by foot or *waka*.⁶³ This ensured that even limited campaigns were only conducted after significant time and effort and was not the spontaneous bloodshed that early literary sources inferred. The offended *hapu* would deliberate at length before committing its warriors as the nucleus of a military operation.

The *hapu* formed the basis for the Maori military unit during the period prior to European contact. A single clan group could field between 70 to 140 warriors for the conduct of a military campaign in a unit known as the *hokowhitu*.⁶⁴ If circumstances dictated, multiple *hapu* may supply *hokowhitu* to join a *taua*. Non-related *hapu* living under the protection of the primary clan in a subordinate relationship may contribute to a

war party to fulfill an obligation to their guardians.⁶⁵ Individuals would also volunteer to join the force, either kin from *hapu* not involved in the conflict or guests visiting at the time who believed they were indebted to their hosts or young warriors wishing to gain military experience and enhance their *mana*⁶⁶. During the pre-European contact period, the scale of battles was much smaller in comparison with those occurring in other parts of the world. One battle of this era known as Hingakaka was deemed a significant encounter, however, only 16,000 warriors were believed to have participated in the event.⁶⁷ The insular nature of Maori loyalty led to difficulty in controlling large forces consisting of multiple groups.

Despite primacy in raising the force and recruiting allies to the cause, the paramount chief did not automatically assume overall command of the war party.⁶⁸ Unless the war leader possessed significant *mana* or was a warrior of renown, contributing *hapu* would remain under the authority of their own chiefs. This parallel command structure simplified the coordination of the expedition for the primary chief however; it led to a fragility of the force's cohesion, as *hapu* would pursue actions that most benefited their personal interests regardless of their part in the overall plan. Elements of a *taua* would sue for peace whilst the remainder of the force continued to fight or groups would conduct actions that would require *utu* from the offended party thereby denying the potential for conflict resolution.⁶⁹ These separate, but allied groups would travel and maneuver independently however would coordinate on the battlefield with each unit performing different functions.⁷⁰ If the entire party did concentrate prior to deploying upon the campaign, the primary *hapu* would host the participants and begin the

series of rituals that governed the contact of the expedition. These gatherings could be used to confirm the cause's validity and clarify the operation's objective.

Military campaigns of the pre-European Maori were limited in duration and objective, resembling a raid more than any other type of offensive operation. Objectives were singularly focused on addressing the *take* agreed upon by the participating groups and were clearly defined at *hui* prior to deployment. Multiple objective operations were not conducted due the inability of a tribal group to maintain and sustain a war party in the field for an extended duration. A *taua* was vulnerable away from its tribal powerbase due to a lack of line of communication with which to be reinforced and resupplied. The initiating *hapu* would have provided all its available warriors towards the conduct of a military operation and was therefore unable to supply more. All interested allies would have done likewise, thereby making the provision of replacements or reinforcements to the force impossible.

Additional restrictions to pre contact Maori military expeditions were the logistical limitations imposed on a force by their level of technological advancement. Movement into an area of operations was conducted either on foot or by war canoe. Both of these modes of transport severely restricted the amount of supplies able to be carried with the force. The *waka* used on *taua* were designed to be light, fast watercraft for rapidly conveying warriors along rivers or coastline. These vessels sat low in the water and did not have enough freeboard to accommodate the additional weight of a large number of supplies.⁷¹ They could carry enough supplies for short duration operations however; Maori did not dedicate any vessels to logistics. Rituals also prevented the war canoes from carrying cooked foodstuffs, which limited the goods that could be taken.⁷²

Maori fared no better in overland supply. Pack animals were not used, as the only domesticated animals possessed by the Maori were dogs. Accompanying dogs were used as a food source. However, the primary method for force sustainment was foraging.

Despite New Zealand's abundant resources, this practice could only be maintained for limited periods. The independent movement of groups contributing to a *taua* alleviated this and enhanced a war party's ability to enter enemy territory undetected. Once a mission had been successfully completed, a *taua* may resupply from captured crops or 'harvest' the slain enemy. Cannibalism was routinely practiced; however, pre-European Maori primarily did it as part of the rituals that governed the conduct of military operations.

Rituals of War

As with all aspects of Maori life, warfare was controlled through a series of rituals. This extended not only to the pursuit of physical war but also in the belief in *taua tapu* or sacred war.⁷³ *Taua tapu* was practiced by *tohunga* using the powers of the occult against offending tribes. *Taua toto* was another type of ritual warfare that did not involve the actual killing of the enemy but consisted of symbolic acts of war.⁷⁴ Performance of a violent *haka*, singing of derogatory songs or defiling of an enemy's land, might be sufficient to satisfy the injured party and prevent combat.⁷⁵ More often, this would lead to an escalation of hostilities to the point at which the *mana* of both groups required compensation through blood. Despite the ferocity, brutality and passion with which the pre-contact Maori prosecuted war, it was conducted in a very deliberate manner under the governance of an extensive series of rituals.

The *tohunga* played an important part in the preparation and conduct of war. As advisers, they would consult the moon phases to ascertain the most propitious day to begin a campaign.⁷⁶ Priests would conduct a *wai taua* ceremony rededicating the warriors to *Tumatauenga*, which placed a *tapu* over the warriors and their weapons to prevent disaster befalling the group.⁷⁷ The rite was a baptism in the *wai tapu* and the effects of the protection remained upon the war party until a cleansing invocation was performed on their return.⁷⁸ Once declared *tapu*, no member of the party could eat, spit or engage in sexual activities.⁷⁹ *Tohunga* accompanied a war party on campaign and was responsible for the spiritual protection of the group for the duration. The early Maori maintained a plethora of events that could be construed as ‘evil omens’ for a warring expedition. Yawning was a sign of cowardice, wind direction, eating whilst standing and the sound of women or children talking or laughing in the forest at night were portents of impending disaster, most probably on the battlefield.⁸⁰ The most important ritual for a war party on a quest for blood vengeance was the requirement to slay the first person they encountered, regardless of at which stage in their mission this occurred or whether they were a member of the offending tribe or not.⁸¹ The observance of this rite was considered crucial to ensuring the raid’s success. Superstitions were also prevalent on the field of combat.

A dryness of the mouth, failure of a young warrior to present his first kill in combat to the *tohunga* or for an inferior chief to attempt to assume command were regarded evil omens on the battlefield.⁸² Rituals were conducted upon arrival at the battle area to strengthen the spiritual protection of the party and avert defeat. The *tohunga* would conduct a further invocation asking for the warriors to retain their courage, strength and martial knowledge in the coming conflict.⁸³ The leaders would also demand

rituals to raise their warriors' passion. *Ahi mahitihiti* required warriors to jump through the flames of a large fire.⁸⁴ The more daring shown in this activity was thought to be representative of a warrior's boldness in battle.⁸⁵ The performance of war dances, or *haka*, was used to heighten the desire for conflict and assuage any fears.

The ritual of *tau-mataki-tahi*, or single combat, was sometimes used to decide the outcome of a conflict.⁸⁶ When the two opposing forces assembled on the battlefield a chief or *toa* (warrior of note) would move forward of his force and challenge a member of the enemy party to an individual contest.⁸⁷ It could occur that a proficient warrior would defeat, in succession, a number of enemy combatants causing the remainder of their force to withdraw from the field thereby deciding the battle without any participation by the main body of either side.⁸⁸ The hostile forces upon arriving at the field of war would commence a series of *haka* as a challenge to their opponents and to observe omens to determine the likelihood of success in order to motivate their own warriors for the coming fight.⁸⁹

At times battles would be decided by the ferocity and proficiency of a party's *haka* that convinced their antagonists of the folly of continuing the activity. The majority of conflicts involving pre contact Maori were resolved through combat and despite the appearance of an orderless melee, the acts of killing performed in these battles were not random.⁹⁰ The killing of a person of rank could bring disastrous consequences upon a tribe.⁹¹ Chiefs would often prescribe orders regarding the treatment of high ranking individuals or limiting the numbers of enemy to be slain.⁹² These instructions were intended to mitigate a large-scale retribution by preventing excesses that would make a peaceful resolution impossible.⁹³

Once the conflict had ended another series of rituals were completed. Immediately after winning the field, the victorious party would conduct a *haka* to express joy at their success and defiance to the enemy.⁹⁴ The *tohunga* would then perform the rite of *ahi-manawa*. This ceremony was the dedication to the gods of the heart of the first enemy slain to thank them for providing a successful outcome.⁹⁵ If the battle was part of a blood feud, the heart would be eaten to intentionally desecrate the deadly enemy and strengthen the victor's *mana*.⁹⁶ Once the party had eaten and regathered their strength they would leave as it was an evil omen to remain camped on the battlefield.⁹⁷ Upon returning to their home village, the warriors remain segregated from the other members of the clan until a ritual removing all the *tapu* of war.⁹⁸ If a force suffered a defeat, the *tohunga* would conduct an investigation to establish whether any *tapu* or rituals have been broken causing the party to have lost the favor of the god of war.⁹⁹

Tactics

Maori warfare, prior to contact with the first European visitors, was a ritualistic endeavor conducted at close quarters with primitive weapons. Reverend Thomas Buddle provides a very good account of a traditional battle in his 1851 '*Lectures*';

When the armies met in open field, they were drawn up by their respective leaders in deep columns face to face, with the hideous war dance. The *Toas*, *i.e.*, the men of valour and bravery, rushed out between, while the principal body rested on their arms and flourished about, defying each other, as Goliath [sic] did the armies of Israel, aiming, at distinction by slaying the first man. The leaders generally exerted themselves to excite the passions of their army by addresses. The reasons of the conflict are set forth with all the peculiar powers of *maori* oratory, and by the most impassioned appeals to the excited feelings of the untutored savage. The pride of the tribe, their honour, their wives, their children, their lands, the bravery of their ancestors, the spirits of the departed, their own lives now menaced,—every fact and circumstance dear to them is invoked, and all the power of their wild poetry and savage rhetoric employed to inflame the passions for war, and stimulate to bravery.¹⁰⁰

The obtaining of first blood held great importance due to its significance as an omen of victory. A warrior would sometimes run into the front rank of the enemy and kill a victim in order greatly enhance his *mana* through this display of bravery and for securing the *mata-ika* (first fish). The *toa* would exclaim, “Kei au te mata-ika!” - “I have the first fish!” at which his *taua* would attack the enemy.¹⁰¹ The nature of the weapons possessed by pre-contact Maori was not conducive to the execution of warfare at distance for any extended duration.¹⁰² Combatants would quickly move to close quarters and engage each other with thrusting and striking weapons made of wood, stone or bone.¹⁰³ This method of battle was ideally suited to the nature of the Maori due the esteem in which martial prowess was held in the culture and the ferocity with which he was willing to defend the prestige of the tribe. Once battle was joined each warrior chose his individual opponent and the conflict resembled a mass of single combats.¹⁰⁴

Pitched battles were uncommon, as Maori believed that maximum honor was gained by defeating an enemy through the most cunning and economical means.¹⁰⁵ This belief may have derived from the value at which each individual was held for the survival of the group. A ‘pyrrhic victory’ could have devastating effects upon a clan’s productivity. The objective of pre-contact Maori military operations was to inflict the appropriate amount of damage upon the enemy at no cost to themselves. War parties preferred to employ tactics that were best executed by small forces under the control of a single commander such as the ambush or *takiri*, a mock retreat. However, large *taua* of multiple *hapu* would also apply these strategies.¹⁰⁶ The *takiri* would be used to draw an enemy from out of a position of strength; either fortified defensive works known as *pa*,

kainga or dominant terrain on the battlefield. The *taua* would send a small portion of its strength, termed a *hunuhunu*, to establish contact with the enemy and entice him to battle.¹⁰⁷ This force would conduct a series of retreats, drawing their opponents to a pre-designated location where the main body of the *taua* would execute an ambush. Maori ambuscades consisted of several groups who waited until the enemy force was contained inside their length before initiating the attack.¹⁰⁸

Pre-contact Maori utilized military deception to maintain surprise and close with the enemy without revealing their hostile intent. Commanders were not beyond treachery to obtain an advantage over opponents and *taua* were known to disguise themselves as slaves or unarmed visitors in order to achieve this. In an extreme case, a war party used a sophisticated ruse whereby they created a ‘whale’ from several dog skins with which to impersonate a beached whale to draw their adversaries out of their *pa*.¹⁰⁹ As with the Trojan horse in *The Aeneid*, the ‘whale’ contained a large number of warriors who attacked the enemy as they came to reap this “gift from the sea” and easily overwhelmed the lightly defended fort. To enhance surprise the Maori would routinely conduct maneuver under cover of darkness to be in position to conduct an attack at dawn or under favorable conditions during the night itself.¹¹⁰ To counter the enemy’s use of deception and to enhance situational awareness, early Maori placed high importance on security and reconnaissance.

During military operations, Maori placed initial emphasis on maintaining the security. When operating in enemy lands, a war leader would employ basic measures to ensure the party was not vulnerable to surprise attack. At each camp, sentries would be placed in dominant positions to observe all the approaches to the position.¹¹¹ A *taua*

would employ forward scouts when moving through hostile territory to establish contact with the enemy and provide early warning of surprise attacks. A group of warriors would advance approximately eight hundred meters in front of the *taua* and upon sighting the enemy, would signal or withdraw back to the main body.¹¹²

Depending upon the information given, decisions would then be made as to the appropriate course of action to be taken. The adversary's disposition would dictate whether a hasty ambush should be established or the *hunuhunu* should be deployed to initiate a *takiri*. The warriors in these forward elements would only conduct this task for short periods due to its dangerous and tiring nature. Routinely scouts were rotated with replacements from the main body to maintain the vigilance of the 'eyes' of the force.¹¹³

Mata-taua were individuals who possessed a naturally observant disposition and displayed a talent for reading signs and omens.¹¹⁴ They were prized by war leaders for their ability to read a man's true nature and understand cues in the environment to provide advice to their commanders in much the same way an intelligence officer does within a modern army. These men were renowned for their ability: to interpret the meaning of different bird cries or their sudden cessation, detect ambushes, or several other skills developed through extensive training in the school of Maori bush warfare.¹¹⁵

Mata-taua could also be used in the close reconnaissance tasks conducted on the enemy. If the objective of an attack was a *pa*, a scouting party may be sent to gather information on the layout of the defense works, numbers of defenders present and amount of food stored. These parties would often employ bold measures to gather intelligence such as the use of spies disguised as traders or infiltrating an enemy camp at night.¹¹⁶

These intelligence collection operations were essential for an attacking force to be able to successfully assail the Maori *pa*.

Each community in pre-European New Zealand possessed a fortified defensive structure called a *pa*. Maori defensive military operations revolved around this stronghold and tribal groups used their *pa* in much the same way that the feudal system in medieval Europe employed the castle. *Hapu* members would occupy *kainga* in close proximity to natural resources and retire to the tactically sited *pa* during times of war or on the appearance of a threat. Maori would utilize dominant ground in the vicinity of their village for the positioning of the *pa*. The summit of a hill's natural defenses would be enhanced through the construction of multiple layers of ditches, embankments, terraces and palisades to create a formidable fortress with which to protect the community. Each defensive line would consist of a ditch leading to a scarp of fifteen to twenty feet in height. On top of this slope would be a ten to fifteen foot high palisade of heavy timber set deep into the earth and lashed together with sturdy forest vines.¹¹⁷ Watchtowers, known as *taumaihi*, were manned at all times from which sentries could provide early warning of an enemy approach and signal the other *hapu* members to retire to the fort.¹¹⁸

The use of high ground was not only to provide observation over the approaches to the tribal area, but also to provide an advantage in hand-to-hand combat. During an attack, warriors who used large stones and long thrusting spears to engage the enemy manned fighting stages inside the fort, called *puhara*.¹¹⁹ *Pa* were virtually impenetrable when the garrison was alerted. Very rarely were these forts taken by assault without the elements of surprise, treachery or a long investiture.¹²⁰ The *pa* did not come into importance until the increasing amount conflict due to population expansion forced clan

groups to develop positions of strength from which to protect their resources. They evolved from simple embankments to complex defensive arrays with four levels of protection. *Pa* were not usually occupied however remained fully stocked with food and water at all times. Groups that had been attacked may occupy the *pa* for long periods, up to several years, after the conflict.¹²¹ The complex array and strength of a *pa*'s defenses made the capture of these structures a very difficult task particularly given the nature of the weapons used by the Maori, at this time.

Pre-Contact Maori Weaponry

The weapons used by Maori in the pre-European contact period were primitive in nature and construction.¹²² The importance of warfare in their society made a warrior's weapons treasured items and the objects of detailed ornamentation and great care. Weapons were considered to possess *mana* and famous weapons were believed to contain special power, which would enable their owner to achieve great deeds. The unpredictable nature of life in New Zealand made a warrior's weapons his constant companion. Males would be armed whilst travelling between villages, when working in *hapu* crop plantations and during the hunting of game.¹²³ The Maori term for weapons is *rakau*. They were constructed from wood, bone and stone and may be divided into three classes; thrusting, striking and projectile weapons.

The thrusting weapons of the Maori were stabbing spears of different size and utility that were used in both offensive and defensive phases of war. The spears used by the Maori were made from the native New Zealand hardwood, the Manuka due to its qualities of strength, hardness and durability. The largest of these weapons was the *huata*, which was a spear of eighteen to twenty feet long and predominantly used by both

attackers and defenders of a *pa*. When used in defense it was wielded by a single warrior and thrust through the palisades at the enemy. In the offense, two men would work together, one forward guiding the weapon and the other at the butt end providing the thrust. If used in open warfare, the huata was employed in a similar manner to the sarissa of a Greek phalanx. The huata would be thrust forward from a position behind the front rank of warriors who were armed with shorter weapons.¹²⁴

The most common spear in use by early Maori was the tao. This weapon was only four to six feet long and constructed from a single piece of hardwood with the point sharpened by fire. The exponent of the tao would be required to master several different offensive and defensive strokes to fully realize the weapon's potential. Tao were particularly effective when pursuing a broken enemy as the light nature of the spear allowed swift warriors to overtake and disable their adversaries for dispatching by the follow up force.¹²⁵ A double pointed weapon, the koikoi, was similar to the tao and used in much the same method. Tete were short, stabbing spears with a large barbed head of white pine or whalebone attached to a six-foot long shaft. This spear would be used in a manner similar to the Zulu assegai and was intended to keep the victim in close proximity after impaling so as to finish him with one of the numerous variety of striking weapons used by the Maori.¹²⁶

The short striking weapons of the pre-contact Maori were not a warrior's primary weapon. Their intended use was as a compliment the longer arms of this class. For ease of description, striking weapons of the pre-European Maori could be divided into two groups, clubs and staffs. The club group consisted of short, single-handed weapons constructed from wood, bone or stone. These weapons were between twelve to twenty

inches in length and when being wielded were attached to their user's wrist by way of a cord of plaited flax. A warrior carried these weapons tucked into the waistband of their maro, or war kilt. The most prominent of these clubs was the mere.

Mere were a flat, teardrop shaped weapons usually constructed from pounamu (Greenstone or jade), however, examples made from more common stone or bone did exist. The stone was worked to achieve a sharp, double-edged oval blade that was used in a horizontal strike to the temple, jaw or ribs of an enemy.¹²⁷ They were used in very close quarters during which the non-master hand would grasp the hair or arm of the opponent to allow the delivery of a killing blow. Downward strokes were avoided as this may have caused the blade to be splintered and several years of effort destroyed. Mere were highly valued and were exchanged between warring chiefs as a symbol of peaceful intent. Single bladed variants known as patu were the next most prolific member of the short weapon group.

Patu were made from dense, heavy native timbers or whalebone and differed from the mere by the fact that they possessed only one striking edge. These weapons were shaped similar to a medieval billhook, with a convex 'blade' and a flat or concave back, which were often ornately carved, and on occasions decorated with shark teeth or stingray barbs.¹²⁸ The patu's leading edge was less of a blade than that of a mere and its blows were delivered with an unusual backhand strike.¹²⁹ A style of patu called kotiate were cello shaped to allow the warrior to 'catch' a blade in the juncture of its two lobes and disarm his opponent with a flick of the wrist.

The final type of short striking weapon was the toki which was an axe consisting of an edged head of stone fastened to a wooden shaft.¹³⁰ It was used in much the same

ways as the Native Americans employed the tomahawk. These short striking weapons were effective in very close proximity and in finishing a disabled foe.

The principal weapons employed by Maori warriors belonged to the sub-group of striking weapons this paper has termed staffs. The most popular and well known of all traditional Maori weapons was the taiaha.¹³¹ Made from hardwood and five feet in length the taiaha had a pointed end carved in the form of a tongue and face known as the arero. The initial third of the weapon resembled a spear of approximately one inch in diameter before the remainder of the weapon flattened out to a blade with a width of two and a half inches at its base. The taiaha was primarily employed in the fashion of a quarterstaff however; the arero could be used to puncture an enemy. The lighter weight of the weapon was counterbalanced by the edged blade enabling it to deliver rapid blows capable of breaking bones and joints. The versatility of the taiaha as an offensive as well as a defensive weapon ensured its popularity and warriors trained extensively to become proficient in its use. Taiaha was often the preferred weapon for duels or individual combat and chiefs would use their taiaha to direct forces.

A weapon similar to the taiaha, the pouwhenua resembled the former in all respects apart from the absence of the arero¹³². The arero was instead replaced with a sharpened point. Pouwhenua were utilized in a similar manner however, a greater emphasis was placed on its stabbing capability. The final striking weapon employed by the Maori was the paiaka or tewhatewha¹³³. This weapon was a battle-axe consisting entirely from one piece of wood or bone. It was four to five feet in length and consisted of a round handle ending at a broad, flat head.¹³⁴ The tewhatewha, when employed, was not directed to strike the enemy with the 'blade' but deliver a crushing blow with the top

portion of the 'handle'.¹³⁵ The head's purpose was simply to add weight to the strike. War leaders most often used Tewhatewha as a symbol of authority or a rallying point.¹³⁶ The emphasis of early Maori warfare was close quarter combat through which an individual was able to enhance one's status and mana. This approach may have led to the dearth of projectile weapons amongst the culture.

A unique aspect of pre-European Maori warfare is the presence of only type of projectile weapon. The Maori did not utilize the bow and arrow, and neither was the sling.¹³⁷ The only weapon that could engage the enemy at a distance was the kopere. These were spears up to nine feet in length and used in concert with kotaha (wooden handled whip) to project out to a distance of two hundred yards.¹³⁸ This was executed by embedding the spear's base in the ground, raising the head to an angle to achieve the desired distance, looping the whipcord around the shaft and propelling the spear forward through a vigorous swing. The primary employment of these throwing spears was during investment of *pa*.¹³⁹ Both attackers and defenders would use kopere to enhance their operations. Use of this weapon, however, was not prolific and Maori demonstrated a strong preference for using weapons that allowed a warrior the ability to enhance his prestige through the demonstration of martial prowess.

To summarize, the maintenance and enhancement of *mana* was the primary cause of warfare in the pre-European contact period. To a lesser extent, land and access to resources were reasons for conflict particularly after population expansion caused greater competition for these assets. The requirement to defend the prestige of the *hapu* or tribe or risk a spiritual weakening of the group, led Maori to engage in limited conflicts over short ranges. Inhibited by responsibilities to the clan, insufficient logistical capability and

difficult alliances, Maori military operations were small scale, short-term affairs. Inability to absorb casualties led pre-contact warfare to be conducted in environment of deception and treachery. A focus on defeating the enemy by the most economical and daring means pushed combat away from pitched battles and more towards the use of ambush and mock retreats to achieve a desired end state. Battles conducted at close quarters with primitive weapons and resembling a conglomeration of individual contests; were ideally suited to Maori psyche and reinforced the importance of martial skill in the society.

¹Rāwiri Taonui. '*Canoe traditions*', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/NewZealanders/MaoriNewZealanders/CanoeTraditions/en> (accessed 18 November 2008).

²Ibid.

³K. R. Howe. '*Ideas of Māori origins*', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/NewZealanders/MaoriNewZealanders/IdeasOfMaoriOrigins/en> (accessed 28 October 2008).

⁴Ibid.

⁵Taonui.

⁶Sutherland, I.L.G. *The Maori Situation*. Wellington, NZ: Harry H. Tombs Ltd, 1935.,⁷

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal. 'Māori', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/NewZealandInBrief/Maori/en> (accessed 8 December 2008).

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Taonui.

¹⁷Howe.

¹⁸Royal.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Royal.

²³Royal.

²⁴Mana is defined by the Te Aka Maori-English, English-Maori Dictionary and Index, as; “prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma - mana is a supernatural force in a person, place or object.”

John C. Moorfield, Te Aka Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary and Index. Longman/ Pearson Education New Zealand, 2005.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Edward Tregear, *The Maori Race*. Wanganui: Archibald Dudingston Willis, 1904., 324

²⁷Moorfield.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Sutherland.,10

³⁰Elsdon Best, edited by Jeff Evans. Notes on the Art of War: As conducted by the Maori of New Zealand, with accounts of various customs, rites, superstitions, &c., pertaining to war, as practised and believed in by the ancient Maori. Auckland, New Zealand: Reed Publishing (NZ) Limited, 2001., 10

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Sutherland.,10

³⁴Best., 142

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Sutherland., 10

⁴²Angela. Ballara, *Taua: 'Musket wars', land wars' or tikanga?* Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin Books (NZ) Limited, 2003., 71

Best., 3

Reverend Thomas. Buddle, *The Aborigines of New Zealand: Two Lectures.* Auckland: Williamson and Wilson, 1851., 33

⁴³Michael. King, *New Zealanders at war.* Auckland: Heinemann Publishers, 1981., 9

⁴⁴Angela Ballara, "*The Role of Warfare in Maori Society in the Early Contact Period.*" *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 1976., 491.

⁴⁵Ballara, *Taua.*, 83

⁴⁶Best., 6-7

⁴⁷Ballara, *Taua.*,82

⁴⁸Ibid., 103

⁴⁹Ibid.,. 108

⁵⁰Ibid., 109

⁵¹Best., 82

⁵²Ibid., 83

- ⁵³Ibid.
- ⁵⁴Vayda, *Maoris and Muskets in New Zealand.*, 565
- ⁵⁵Best., 8
- ⁵⁶Vayda, *Maoris and Muskets in New Zealand.*, 569
- ⁵⁷Best., 111
- ⁵⁸Ibid.
- ⁵⁹Ballara, *Taua.*, 114
- ⁶⁰Ibid.
- ⁶¹Ibid., 116
- ⁶²Ibid., 107
- ⁶³Ibid., 116
- ⁶⁴Ibid., 67
- ⁶⁵Ibid., 68
- ⁶⁶Ibid., 69
- ⁶⁷Ibid., 23
- ⁶⁸Ibid., 69
- ⁶⁹Ibid.
- ⁷⁰Ibid.
- ⁷¹Ibid., 24
- ⁷²Ibid.
- ⁷³Ibid., 112
- ⁷⁴Ibid., 113
- ⁷⁵Ibid.
- ⁷⁶Best., 24

- ⁷⁷Ibid., 164
- ⁷⁸Ibid.
- ⁷⁹Ballara, *Taua.*, 117
- ⁸⁰Best., 20-21
- ⁸¹Ibid., 20
- ⁸²Ibid., 20-21
- ⁸³Ibid., 15
- ⁸⁴Ibid., 37
- ⁸⁵Ibid., 37
- ⁸⁶Buddle., 148
- ⁸⁷Ibid.
- ⁸⁸Ibid.
- ⁸⁹Ibid., 175
- ⁹⁰Ballara, *Taua.*, 117
- ⁹¹Ibid.
- ⁹²Ibid., 118
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- ⁹⁴Best., 175
- ⁹⁵Ibid., 188
- ⁹⁶Ibid., 190
- ⁹⁷Ibid., 22
- ⁹⁸Ballara, *Taua.*, 117
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- ¹⁰⁰Buddle., 38

¹⁰¹S. Percy Smith, *"Wars of the Northern against the Southern Tribes of New Zealand in the Nineteenth Century."* The Journal of the Polynesian Society, September 1899., 159

¹⁰²Buddle., 40

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵David Lewis, *The Maori heirs of Tane* . London: Orbis Publishing Limited, 1982., 107

¹⁰⁶Andrew P Vayda, *Maori Warfare*. Wellington, 1960., 30

¹⁰⁷Best., 120

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ballara, *Taua.*, 146

¹¹⁰Vayda., 42-64

¹¹¹Best., 122

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Best., 247

¹¹⁶Ballara, *Taua.*, 145

¹¹⁷Best., 228

¹¹⁸Edward Tregear, *The Maori Race*. Wanganui: Archibald Dudingston Willis, 1904., 304

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¹²¹Ballara, *Taua.*, 141

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- ¹²⁴Tregear., 309
- ¹²⁵Ibid.
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- ¹²⁸Ibid., 312
- ¹²⁹Best., 133
- ¹³⁰Ibid.
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- ¹³²Ibid., 135
- ¹³³Ibid., 134
- ¹³⁴Tregear., 312
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CHAPTER 3

MAORI WARFARE IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN FIRST EUROPEAN CONTACT AND THE NEW ZEALAND WARS

European Discovery

The first European contact with Maori occurred when the Dutch explorer, Abel Tasman discovered the land he named New Zealand over the period 13 December 1642 to 6 January 1643.¹ Despite peaceful intent, Tasman's attempts to interact with the native people were punctuated by violence and killings by both sides.² After this initial expedition further Maori contact with Europeans did not occur until the separate French and British explorations of 1769. The Englishman, Captain James Cook is credited with the first circumnavigation of the country's major islands and the surveying of its landmasses. Cook and his men had a similar experience to Tasman on their first encounter with the Maori. The Europeans, misunderstanding the aggressive welcoming rituals of the natives, opened fire killing several locals. Unlike Tasman, Cook did develop an effective relationship with the indigenous people, which allowed him to present detailed findings about the country, and its people upon his return to the United Kingdom. He recorded of the Maori that "all their actions and behavior towards us tended to prove that they are a brave, open, warlike people and void of treachery."³

Cook's accounts of New Zealand and its inhabitants aroused significant interest in England including the American philosopher Benjamin Franklin. Franklin and a group of associates initiated an enterprise "for carrying the benefits of civilization to the New Zealanders."⁴ In order to gain support, a pamphlet was published entitled "*Scheme of a voyage to convey the conveniences of life, domestic animals, corn, iron, etc. to New*

Zealand, with Dr Benjamin Franklin's sentiments upon the subject.”⁵ Nothing came of these humanitarian sentiments however, it did influence support for further voyages by Captain Cook to the country. These later expeditions led to the introduction of domesticated animals and various kinds of plants and seeds. Cook's manner in dealing with the Maori allowed the two races to develop a relationship of mutual respect and benefit. This was not the case for French visitors who did not reciprocate the native's hospitality, which inevitably led to bloodshed. Europeans, unaware of the Maori concepts of *tapu* and *mana* would transgress the local laws thereby causing vengeance to be exacted on the next members of the *pakeha* tribe who crossed their path. This situation combined with accounts of their cannibalism, led to the Maori being held in great fear by sailors at the end of the eighteenth century. This fact was the primary reason that prevented New Zealand being established as a penal colony.⁶

First European Settlers

Despite this reprieve, the early European residents of the country were not of much higher caliber. Around 1800, European and American sealers and whalers began operating around the New Zealand coastline.⁷ Many ships based themselves out of the country and became the first white residents of New Zealand. Increased maritime traffic to the country exposed the Maori to European technologies that significantly enhanced their way of life. They were enthusiastic to acquire all the benefits of these new technologies without disrupting their existing social structures and lifestyle.⁸ A system of trade began between the local people and the sailors where the former provided food in exchange for European commodities, in particular iron. Escaped or ex convicts from New South Wales and shipwrecked or runaway sailors were the first white people to

permanently reside in New Zealand. These rough, often-violent, individuals demonstrated little consideration in their treatment of the Maori and established large white male communities that operated in a state of anarchy.⁹ The indigenous people tolerated the intrusion of these barbaric pakeha, as they were an important conduit for the acquisition of European goods. These groups of poorly educated, vicious men treated the native people very differently from the missionaries who began arriving in later decades.

In 1814, Christian missionaries began establishing outposts in New Zealand. Their mission was to bring Christianity to the Maori in order to begin the “civilization” of the race. They played an important part in developing the interaction between Maori and European in particular the teaching of English to the natives. Missionaries became trusted and respected by the tribes however; their greatest value was seen as a source of European goods. Additionally, they were instrumental in Maori leadership travelling to the United Kingdom, where they viewed British society and were impressed by the European military forces and their weapons of war. The chiefs who visited England returned to New Zealand determined to elevate their people to the higher quality of life they observed in Europe. The Maori traditional way of life incorporated Iron implements, new crops, agricultural techniques and timber mills as contact became more regular. Maori leaders became educated about the Napoleonic wars in Europe through missionaries and set out to bring the scale and technologies of these conflicts into their own warfare.

The Introduction of Firearms

Foremost in Maori priorities was the acquisition of firearms which would give them overwhelming superiority over their enemies. Initially the introduction of muskets had

limited effect of on the conduct of warfare by the Maori. Early battles included only small numbers of firearms, which did not provide a significant advantage for the force in their possession. An example of this was the battle at Moremonui in which the *Ngati Whatua* people, who were armed with only traditional weapons, defeated the *Nga Puhi* tribe who possessed four muskets.¹⁰ The *Ngati Whatua* used reconnaissance and a spy mission to attain the *Nga Puhi* course of action and ambushed the enemy in their assembly area. During the ensuing battle, the momentum shifted between the forces several times before the *Ngati Whatua* closed with the enemy and thereby mitigating the effects of the muskets. During the close quarter battle, the *Nga Puhi* war leader was killed causing the force to flee the field. Several major *Nga Puhi* chiefs and warriors were killed during the ensuing rout and the casualties were so great that the conflict became commonly known as Te Kai a te Karoro (the seagull's feast) because the dead were so numerous that the bodies were left for the sea birds.¹¹ A minor chief, Hongi Hika, escaped and made the attainment of utu for this humiliating defeat his primary desire. It is believed that the motivation behind Hongi Hika's journey to England in 1820 was to acquire a large quantity of muskets with which to avenge his tribesmen.¹²

Small numbers of firearms could have a decisive effect against tribes who had not experienced these weapons before. During the assault of a *pa* in Taranaki, the *Nga Puhi* used their limited muskets to defeat the will of the opposition. Upon seeing the approaching assault force, the defenders manned their fighting stages in order to taunt and challenge the enemy before dropping rocks and stones on them. Once they had closed within range the *Nga Puhi* marksmen shot these warriors dead causing the besieged force, who were unfamiliar with the noise and range of these weapons, to

believe that supernatural forces were being employed against them. This allowed an uncontested seizure of the *pa*, as the defenders were paralyzed with fear.¹³ This reaction was commonly seen amongst tribes encountered the power of muskets for the first time. As Maori became more familiar with firearms, traditionally armed groups began devising tactics to counter the weapons advantage. Tribes would drop to the ground at the point they perceived a volley would be fired before jumping up and closing rapidly with the enemy to a range at which they could use their traditional weapons to their best effect. Maori quickly identified the advantages firearms could provide a military force however; their true impact was not seen until tribes were able to employ these weapons in greater numbers. The significance of massed firepower in Maori warfare is best demonstrated by the actions of the first chiefs to equip their forces with large numbers of firearms; Hongi Hika and Te Rauparaha.

Hongi Hika and Te Rauparaha

The *Nga Puhi* were a tribe in the north of New Zealand who maintained an eternal enmity of the neighboring *Ngati Whatua*. Martiallly inferior to their enemy, the *Nga Puhi* were dealt numerous defeats over the period of their conflict.¹⁴ Their feud culminated in their loss of several chiefs and renowned warriors at the battle of Moremonui. As previously mentioned, a minor chief Hongi Hika escaped this battle and made it his desire to achieve revenge for this defeat. Hongi Hika assumed leadership of the *Nga Puhi* soon after Moremonui and quickly set about a plan to obtain large numbers of muskets. He emphasized to the tribe the need to establish effective relationships with the European traders and missionaries in order to maintain a regular supply of firearms. It was through

his relationship with a missionary, Thomas Kendall that Hongi Hika travelled to England where he was granted an audience with King George the IV.¹⁵

During his visit, the chief toured of the royal armory at Buckingham Palace from which gifts of a full suit of armor, double-barreled guns and many other valuable items were presented to him. During his visit, Hongi Hika displayed a particular interest in the military forces' discipline and different weapons of war.¹⁶ He received numerous gifts of firearms and ammunition from well wishing friends, who were oblivious to detrimental effect these weapons would have on the indigenous New Zealand populace. Hongi Hika returned to New Zealand via Sydney, Australia where he sold the tools, agricultural implements and armor and in return was given or bought 300 muskets, powder and shot.¹⁷ Immediately upon his return, he began assembling a force with which to exact revenge.

The *Nga Puhi* now set to obtaining revenge for the numerous unfulfilled insults to their tribal *mana*. The power of the large number of firearms possessed by the tribe allowed Hongi Hika to coerce several *hapu* to support his cause. The use of this threat compelled many weaker groups to join the *Nga Puhi* cause. Hongi Hika was able to mobilize forces of between 1,000 to 2,000 warriors centered around his core of muskets and pursued operations throughout New Zealand's North Island. Prior to the introduction of firearms, *Nga Puhi* military campaigns were never greater than two hundred miles from the tribal base. However, this campaign penetrated to the southern extremities of the North Island, a distance of approximately eight hundred miles. Hongi Hika pursued his military actions continually throughout his reign and countered the pleas of Christian missionaries to stop by stating that he would not until he had established control over the

entire island and New Zealand had only one king like England.¹⁸ In 1828, he died from wounds received in battle without achieving this vision, primarily due to the balancing influence of a southern chief named Te Rauparaha.

Te Rauparaha was third son of the leader of a small North Island tribe known as the *Ngati Toa*. The tribe were renowned for their skill in battle however; their relatively small size in relation to their neighbors inhibited the tribe's ability to exert influence. During a journey to the Kapiti region on the south west coast of the North Island, Te Rauparaha and his tribal chief, Tuwhare discovered a shipwreck, which they took as a sign to indicate the frequent presence of European vessels. Tuwhare proposed relocating the tribe to this area in order to benefit from contact with the *pakeha*. Te Rauparaha's concurrence with this idea and the growing threat to the tribal territory from *Nga Puhi* predations caused him to lead the *Ngati Toa* to embark on a journey of conquest of the Kapiti territory after assuming authority upon Tuwhare's death.¹⁹

By 1825, the *Ngati Toa* were well settled in their new domain and had established a monopoly over the European trade market in this region. They were the sole agent from which the inland tribes could gain their supplies of European goods. This dominance allowed them to gather a large number of muskets while also controlling the access to these weapons of the neighboring tribes. An additional benefit was the desire of weaker tribes to cultivate a favorable relationship through gifts of foodstuffs and mutually beneficial alliances.

Te Rauparaha sought to expand the *Ngati Toa* strength by establishing control over the entire area governing the Cook Strait. To achieve this he began a campaign to seize the land on the North Island's southern tip. His expansionist aims convinced several

neighboring tribes of the necessity of removing this threat. They assembled a force of 2,000 warriors and conducted a night assault by sea against Te Rauparaha's island fortress.²⁰ The *pa* contained only sixty warriors who conducted a successful spoiling attack against the enemy war canoes as they landed. After this defeat, the rebel tribes ceased their desire to remove Te Rauparaha and returned to their previous allegiance. The alliances afforded by his strength of arms allowed Te Rauparaha to call on large numbers of forces with which to execute his military operations. His forces regularly numbered above 1,000 and his assault on the *pa* at Kaiapohia in the South Island was conducted by a war party of 5,000.²¹

Te Rauparaha invaded New Zealand's South Island to exact *utu* against the *Ngai Tahu* for participating in the attack on his tribal base. With this campaign, he brought the new weapons of war to the southern tribes. Te Rauparaha utilized European ships to transport his forces across the dangerous waters of the Cook Strait. This mode of transport provided two advantages. The first was the ability to move large numbers of personnel, *waka* and supplies across a volatile stretch of ocean. The second advantage was to use the European presence as bait to lure an unsuspecting enemy out to the ship. It was in this manner that Te Rauparaha captured the paramount chief of the *Ngai Tahu*, Tamaiharanui. He engaged the services of a European trader, Captain Stuart, to assist him in the capture of Tamaiharanui in exchange for filling the ship's hold with flax.²² Te Rauparaha convinced Stuart to entice Tamaiharanui on board through the promise of firearms and powder. As soon as the chief mounted the deck, he was seized by the *Ngati Toa* and transported back to Kapiti after his *pa* was attacked and destroyed. For his

assistance, Captain Stuart received twenty-five tons of flax. By the end of this operation in the South Island, Te Rauparaha had established control as far south as Akaroa.

Te Rauparaha was now feared throughout the lower portion of the North Island and the top half of the South Island. His successful incorporation of European technology and use of treachery allowed him to control access to European trade over middle New Zealand. Te Rauparaha continued to develop his relationship with the Europeans so that when his military power diminished he was still revered by them for his statesmanship.

Arms Race

The overwhelming response to the introduction of massed firearms was to create an arms race among the Maori in order to achieve a decisive advantage or avoid annihilation. To facilitate the acquisition of muskets the Maori prosecuted a ruthless trade campaign in which they sought to monopolize the European trade to their area. Initially the coastal tribes with their greater access to visiting European ships gained a significant advantage over the inland groups. Once knowledge of these new technologies filtered to these interior tribes they actively sought to acquire them and would send trading parties to coastal areas in order to establish contact.

The Maori persistence in receiving firearms and ammunition as the only currency for the food and goods they supplied caused a dilemma for the missionaries living in New Zealand. The missionaries were forced to compromise their principles in order to survive, as the natives would not provide food and water unless they were paid in muskets.²³ Less scrupled sailors, who relied on the Maori for resupply, would happily part with their older, inferior weapons in exchange for essential stores. Foodstuffs did not remain the only commodity demanded from the Maori as European contact increased.

The New Zealand flax plant and native *kauri* tree were the commodities in most demand by the Europeans. Flax was sought by the textile industry for its greater strength and durability over its Russian counterpart and the timber of the *kauri* was preferred by the British Royal Navy for masts and spars for its warships. The Maori were fervent in their desire to acquire firearms, a factor the Europeans more familiar with a system of commerce, exploited. Huge quantities of desired commodities were demanded in exchange for weapons. An individual musket or keg of powder required several tons of flax for its purchase.²⁴ The natives made the preparation and harvest of these goods their prime occupation in order to meet the price of their European suppliers. So much time and resources were spent in the planting of flax that tribes began to neglect the necessities of life. All of a *hapu's* manpower was employed in the generation of trade goods. All fertile land was used to grow flax rather than cultivating food crops and insufficient supplies of food led to starvation among some tribes.²⁵

This need to produce large amounts of goods to obtain new weapons also facilitated a change in the execution of Maori warfare. As contact between Maori and European developed, the variety of goods demanded for weapons expanded. Preserved tattooed heads and female sex slaves joined introduced items such as pigs and potatoes as suitable currency. Slaves were previously only taken as revenge or to deliberately insult a rival group. They were now seen as a way to expand a tribe's workforce and allow more muskets to be bought without burdening one's own people. Prisoners of war also provided a source for preserved heads. In addition to the heavily tattooed heads of chiefs and warriors killed or captured in combat, at times non-tattooed enemy would be

‘decorated’ before being slain to meet a trade demand.²⁶ As the European demand for New Zealand goods grew so did the number of firearms among the Maori.

After the musket’s introduction into Maori warfare, the strength of a military force became measured by the number of these weapons it possessed. In 1819, a war party with twelve firearms was considered strong.²⁷ After Hongi Hika’s return from England in 1820, the *Nga Puhi* could mount several hundred muskets and the following year a missionary in the region believed that there could not be “less than two thousand stands of arms among the natives.”²⁸ As the scope of warfare increased, *taua* were no longer satisfied to inflict the limited casualties discussed in the previous chapter. During the initial *Nga Puhi* campaigns, Hongi Hika would kill enemy to the last man to ensure that knowledge of his new weapons did not reach his next victim. *Nga Puhi* oral traditions report that 3,500 enemy were killed during their first two campaigns after Hongi Hika returned from the United Kingdom.²⁹ The larger forces being fielded and greater frequency of conflict enabled by the musket resulted in a greater number of deaths than previously experienced. It is estimated that between 1822 and 1837, the number of deaths attributed to warfare or the consequences of war exceeded 60,000 persons.³⁰ The exponential increase in the number of firearms continued until the 1830s when greater European presence throughout the country allowed an equilibrium to be achieved.

The spread of muskets also necessitated adaptations to Maori tactics. With the introduction of firearms, much of the ritualism disappeared from the battlefield. The requirement to engage the enemy before he realized the weapons being employed against him led *taua* to dispense with the formalities previously conducted prior to the commencement of battle. The *haka* or war dance returned later as both protagonists

arrived at the battlefield armed with firearms. The battles during this period of balance resembled pre-contact warfare. Opposing forces would arrive at the chosen battle site and war leaders would inspire their forces with exhortations before leading the *haka* challenge to the enemy.

Once these rituals were complete, the military forces would form into a firing line two ranks deep and advance towards each other. When the groups were within one hundred yards of each other they would fire a volley, often without raising their musket to the shoulder to aim, before dropping their firearms and charging to close quarters to use traditional Maori weapons.³¹ Women and children would advance behind the warriors collecting the discarded muskets and heads of slain foe.³²

Pa design now incorporated fighting pits and loopholes from which to engage an assaulting force from concealed positions. In 1832, the *Ngati Toa* assaulted the *Ngai Tahu* pa at *Kaiapohia*, during which the defenders engaged the attacking force from twenty feet deep trenches covered with timber that had been dug around the fort.³³ To overcome this, Te Rauparaha ordered three trenches dug in a zigzag pattern towards the gates of the *pa*.³⁴ Once the ditches had reached the palisades, brush and ferns were placed at the heads of the trenches and set on fire. This created the desired breach through which the *Ngati Toa* stormed the *pa*.³⁵ As more groups gained possession of firearms, the desire for war began to decline. The balance in combat power removed the ability of a chief to coerce kin and neighboring groups to join a war party and long-range *taua* now lacked the security that firearms previously gave them in enemy territory. The inability to achieve an easy victory as well as the growing influence of Christianity led to a rapid decline in the instances of war.³⁶

Effects of European Contact

Initially warfare in the early contact period was conducted for the same reasons as the pre European Maori. Maori continued to wage war over resources and *mana*. The significant advantage that massed firearms gave to a force allowed weaker groups to exact revenge for past offenses. Hongi Hika's motivation for his bloody campaigns of the 1820s was to seek vengeance for defeats and insults *Nga Puhi* had received in preceding generations. The introduction of Christian values into Maori society effectively removed *utu* as a motivation for war.

Land gained more importance as European trade grew, particularly those areas which allowed production of desirable commodities and was accessible to developing centers of commerce. Maori actively sought to control access to the most important resource of the time, Europeans. Te Rauparaha's desire to dominate European trade in middle New Zealand allowed the *Ngati Toa* to move from a small minor tribe and establish itself as a powerful tribal group. Observers at the time believed that Hongi Hika and Te Rauparaha were influenced in their expansionist ambitions by the actions of Napoleon Bonaparte in Europe.³⁷ While attributing Maori campaigns of conquest to the influence of an individual may be a stretch of logic, the chiefs who travelled to Europe were introduced to a society that operated under a single authority. These leaders were impressed with the advancement of British civilization and sought to raise their people to the level of their hosts.

The employment of firearms in these campaigns of conquest necessitated changes to the tactical execution of Maori warfare. Larger forces could be generated to prosecute operations for a longer duration and over greater distances. No longer was war limited to

skirmishing with neighboring groups but pursued as far as logistically able. Aims in warfare changed, as no longer was the repayment the sole objective. The activity was also viewed as an opportunity for the acquisition of commodities with which to enrich the tribe. The ability to rapidly regenerate combat power through the purchase of firearms permitted warfare to be conducted with greater frequency. Defeated groups did not require generations to reestablish sufficient strength with which to seek *utu*. The equilibrium achieved through the proliferation of massed firearms amongst all the tribal groups caused a cessation of intra Maori conflict in the late 1830s. The Maori did not execute large-scale warfare again until their conflicts with European settlers beginning in the 1840s.

¹Robert McNab, *From Tasman to Marsden: A History of Northern New Zealand from 1642 to 1818*. Dunedin: J.Wilkie and Co. Ltd, 1914.

²Ibid.

³Sutherland, I.L.G. *The Maori Situation*. Wellington, NZ: Harry H. Tombs Ltd, 1935., 14.

⁴Ibid., 15

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷George Clarke, *Notes on Early Life in New Zealand*. Walch and Sons Printers, 1903., 6

⁸David P Ausubel, "The Maori: A Study in Resistive Acculturation." *Social Forces*, Vol.39, No.3, March 1961.

⁹Sutherland., 17

¹⁰S. Percy Smith, "Wars of the Northern against the Southern Tribes of New Zealand in the Nineteenth Century." *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, September 1899., 159-161.

¹¹Ibid., 160

¹²Ibid., 161

¹³S. Percy Smith, "*Wars of the Northern Against Southern Tribes of New Zealand in the Nineteenth Century. Part II.*" The Journal of the Polynesian Society, December 1899., 221

¹⁴Smith, *Wars of the Northern against the Southern Tribes of New Zealand in the Nineteenth Century.*, 145

¹⁵Reverend R. Taylor, *Te Ika a Maui, or, New Zealand and its inhabitants: illustrating the origin, manners, customs, mythology, religion, rites, songs, proverbs, fables, and language of the natives; together with the geology, natural history, productions, and climate of the country, its state as regards Christianity, sketches of the principal chiefs, and their present position.* Wertheim and MacIntosh, 1855., 310

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., 311

¹⁸Ibid. 314

¹⁹Tamihana Te Rauparaha, "*Rauparaha. (Ngati Toa: Written by Tamihana Te Rauparaha.)*." In *The Ancient History of the Maori, His Mythology and Traditions: Tainui*. [Vol VI], by John White, 12-84. Government Printer, 1890., 16

²⁰Ibid., 28

²¹Ibid., 38

²²Ibid., 32

²³George L. Craik, "*The New Zealanders.*" In *The Library of Entertaining Knowledge*. London: Charles Knight ,1830.

²⁴Andrew P Vayda, "*Maoris and Muskets in New Zealand: Disruption of a War System.*" *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol.85, No.4, December 1970., 581

²⁵Ibid., 581

²⁶Andrew P Vayda, "*Maori Prisoners and Slaves in the Nineteenth Century.*" *Ethnohistory*, Vol.8, No.2, 1961.,148

²⁷Vayda, *Maoris and Muskets in New Zealand.*, 572

²⁸Ibid., 572

²⁹Ibid., 580

³⁰WTL Travers, *Some Chapters in the Life and Times of Te Rauparaha: Chief of the Ngati Toa*. Wellington: New Zealand James Hughes Publisher, 1872., 24

³¹Craik.

³²Craik.

³³Te Rauparaha., 38

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Vayda., 584

³⁷Smith, *Wars of the Northern against the Southern Tribes of New Zealand in the Nineteenth Century.*, 144

CHAPTER 4

MAORI WARFARE DURING THE NEW ZEALAND WARS

Colonization

The formal establishment of New Zealand as a British colony was forced upon the British Crown by two factors. In 1839, despite French assurances to the British Foreign Office that they harbored no desires on New Zealand, there were secret preparations to colonize the country. The French King, Louis Philippe authorized his Minister of Marine, Admiral Duperre' to establish terms to support a French group, *Nantes-Bordelaise*, in their scheme to acquire land in New Zealand which he did by promising the presence of warships.¹ The British Government had concerns with a rival power establishing a colony located in close proximity to their Australian territories. The French company was formed and a shipload of settlers was transported to New Zealand aboard a French man-of-war. However when they arrived it was to find the British flag flying over all the country's major ports.²

The second factor was the formation of The New Zealand Company in London and their intent to establish an independent state in any area of land that the native New Zealanders would cede to them. This private venture raised capital of 100,000 pounds sterling and sold 100,000 acres of land in London before any purchases had been made in New Zealand.³ In 1840, the company chartered a ship and deployed its first expedition of settlers before the British Government could stop them. Upon their arrival, New Zealand Company agents began an aggressive campaign of land procurement. The scheme involved the purchase of vast tracts of land from the Maori with blankets, axes, fishhooks, books and other inconsequential items after which the natives would also

supply the labor force for the “white nation builders”.⁴ An extreme example of this is the twenty million acres of land in central New Zealand believed to have been purchased for sixty red cotton nightcaps. The first group of settlers arrived in the lower North Island of the country and began a series of dubious purchases through which they believed they had claimed ownership over one quarter of the Northern island and one fifth of the South Island. The activities of the New Zealand Company and the desire to prevent a competing power from establishing interests so close to Australia forced the British Government to appoint a Governor and cede New Zealand to the British Crown.⁵

New Zealand’s first Governor, William Hobson, arrived in the Bay of Islands seven days after the first shipload of New Zealand Company settlers. By 6 February 1840, he had negotiated the Treaty of Waitangi through which the native people passed the governance of New Zealand to the British Crown. In return, the Queen guaranteed the Maori recognition of land and property rights, equal justice to all inhabitants and afforded them the full status of British subjects.⁶ Over five hundred tribal leaders signed the document, many with little or no comprehension of what they were doing. Many were influenced by Christian missionaries who had established a trusted relationship with the Maori leadership advised the chiefs to sign. As every signatory received a blanket and some tobacco, some simply signed to obtain the “governors blanket”.⁷ Translations of the treaty were produced in both English and Maori, which led to contention from its inception.

Tension Rises

The Maori language did not possess a word that directly translated to sovereignty and the very concept was alien to their culture. Their understanding of the treaty was that

they retained the land and ‘tino rangatiratanga’ which means self-governance. To the Maori people this interpretation was vitally important that while they sealed their allegiance to Queen Victoria, she respected their right to tribal self-governance and would provide protection to the people. This was at odds with the European perception who believed they could obtain as much land as possible through any kind of means and they would receive the support of the government.

Prior to 1840, Maori adapted the benefits of European civilization into their traditional way of life. As European ships arrived with greater frequency and carrying greater numbers of people, this position turned to where civilization demanded adjustment from the Maori.⁸ The native people soon realized that in signing the treaty they had underestimated the predatory nature of the colonists who were determined to acquire the most desirable land by any means and establish the primacy of European political and economic systems.⁹ In many areas, the previous eagerness of the Maori for European contact changed to disillusionment, suspicion and hostility as seemingly endless numbers of settlers, with an expectation of possessing the land, arrived in New Zealand.¹⁰ To address this threat to Maori supremacy and racial integrity the tribes reverted to their ancient remedy for dispute resolution, war.

On 17 June 1843, the first violent encounter between settlers and Maori occurred in the Wairau Valley of the upper South Island. Te Rauparaha, the prominent inter-tribal war chief, disputed the legitimacy of a land purchase in this area. He and his nephew, Te Rangihaeata, disrupted the New Zealand Company surveyors from conducting their task by removing survey poles and burning down their huts. This led the New Zealand Company to seek Te Rauparaha’s arrest. They sought to execute the arrest through their

agent Captain Arthur Wakefield, the Nelson magistrate, H. H. Thompson, and a posse of fifty settlers. Upon confronting the chief, a discussion ensued during which Te Rauparaha refused to accompany the magistrate, however was willing to present the dispute to the Government Land Commissioner. Magistrate Thompson became irritated, sought to handcuff Te Rauparaha, and ordered the settlers to physically apprehend the chief. During the tense situation, a colonist accidentally discharged his weapon, which in turn caused both sides to begin firing at each other. The Maori won the contest and whilst some of the posse escaped, Wakefield, Thompson and seventeen settlers were forced to surrender. As the situation was cooling, Te Rangihaeata discovered that his wife had been killed in the skirmish, which caused him to personally kill all of the captives. The Government attributed the misunderstanding to the 'hot headed' Thompson and took no action against the Maori involved. A significant additional factor contributing to this approach may have been the lack of a military presence in the colony. The lack of Government action did not go unnoticed in the upper part of the North Island.

The Northern War

The military conflict began with the Northern War fought between March 1845 and January 1846. The hostilities were an effort by a faction of the *Nga Puhi* to maintain the nominal sovereignty afforded to them in the Treaty of Waitangi. Hone Heke had become an influential chief in the tribe due to significant *mana*, through his being Hongi Hika's nephew and his military leadership in the inter tribal conflicts. He had become agitated at the government imposition of laws and ordinances affecting Maori without consulting tribal leadership. The *Nga Puhi* were suffering economically due to the introduction of an anchor duty that caused ships to seek other ports, restrictions on the

falling of timber and the movement of the country's capital to Auckland from Kororareka (now Russell). These factors were supplemented in 1841 when other *Nga Puhi* chiefs surrendered a minor chief to the Government to be hanged for murder. During the tribal discussions, Heke agreed that the offender needed to be punished and that the death sentence was appropriate. However, he believed that Maori law should be used. It was during this period that the acting American consul, Captain William Mayhew, pointed out that the most obvious sign of British dominance of New Zealand was their flag flying on the flagpole at Kororareka. This flagstaff was constructed from timber grown on Heke's land and he had presented it to the government. The fact that his own gift now carried a symbol of the oppression of his people drove Heke to act.¹¹

Between 8 July 1844 and 9 January 1845, Hone Heke cut down the flagpole at Kororareka on three occasions. Each act elicited a military response from the government that increased progressively each time it was deployed. The 'cat and mouse' game occurred between Heke and the Governor where the chief would fell the flagpole and then apologize once British troops moved into the area. During this period, Heke established an alliance with another powerful chief, Kawiti, who would usually have been a rival for control of the *Nga Puhi* tribe. Kawiti did not share Heke's motivation for maintaining Maori sovereignty and joined the alliance primarily to test the British soldiers in battle.¹² None of the *Nga Puhi* leadership including Heke wanted British expulsion from the area. The majority of chiefs under Waaka Nene supported the British government against the rebels and chose to demonstrate their concerns about sovereignty in a different manner. By mid January 1845, a new flagstaff had been erected that was reinforced with iron around its base and two blockhouses were built in Kororareka for its

defense. These improved defenses, allowed Kawiti to convince Heke to seize the town as a strong message to the government.¹³

At dawn on 11 March 1845, Heke and his followers attacked Kororareka. The town's defenses consisted of 140 soldiers, sailors and marines from the 96th Regiment and *HMS Hazard* and 200 armed townspeople based around the two blockhouse strongpoints. Fire support was provided by four land based cannon and the guns of the *HMS Hazard*. The Maori attacked the town on three fronts. The supporting effort using the warriors of the *Kapotai hapu* suppressed the lower blockhouse from the cover of a near area of bush. A force under Kawiti surprised the gun battery and took the weapons after a desperate struggle. The intended decisive action was anti-climatic as Heke's force was able to seize the main blockhouse against light opposition and severed the flagpole for the fourth, and final, time. Ineffective firing was exchanged by both sides for several hours during which the garrison's powder magazine exploded. With the Maori in control of the redoubts, the British evacuated all occupants by ship and the *HMS Hazard* commenced a bombardment of the town.

The loss of a settlement to a Maori force had severe consequences throughout the colony. Many settlers sold their land and possessions and left on ships as soon as possible. The government became fixated on the idea that the next target of the Maori would be Auckland. Significant pressure from the media and public, combined with his handling of the Wairau incident, convinced Governor Fitzroy to take action to stabilize the north. He sent to Australia for reinforcements and began planning for an offensive campaign against the rebels.¹⁴ On 22 April, the requested soldiers arrived in Auckland, which enabled the Government to mount an expedition of 300 British regular troops, 40

volunteers from the colony and 120 sailors and marines. The force under the command of Lieutenant Colonel William Hulme, the Commanding Officer of the 96th Regiment, contained no cavalry and its only artillery consisted of two rocket tubes manned by naval personnel. The force deployed north by ship and landed at Onewhero Bay on 3 May 1845.¹⁵

Heke's men began constructing a new *pa* at Puketutu as soon as they received indications of British intent to conduct offensive operations. Pro-government *Nga Puhi* under Waaka Nene had harassed Heke continually and the fortification had not been completed when the British force arrived. Three sides had been completed with double or triple palisading, but a light fence was the only protection on the fourth side. Kawiti and his warriors arrived on 7 May and agreed to support Heke despite the inherent weakness of the *pa*. He chose not to join the garrison inside the fort and adopted a position in an area of bush outside. This provided Heke with 340 warriors with which to defend against a British attack.

The British force arrived the same day after a difficult four day, fifteen-mile march. The following day Lieutenant Colonel Hulme decided to conduct an assault of the *pa*. His plan involved an initial bombardment with the rockets to strike fear into the native defenders followed by a force seizing the high ground on the right flank before the bulk of his force conducted a frontal assault against the defenses. Waaka Nene's pro-government Maori were to guard the left flank. The opening rocket salvo was highly unsuccessful as the temperamental weapons flew high and wide of the target. One round eventually landed inside the *pa*, at which time Hulme immediately launched the attack on the right flank. This attack achieved their objective after driving off a Maori security

element. One hour later, a general attack was ordered and as the force was preparing to begin its assault, Kawiti's *taua* began to engage them from the rear. The British turned the majority of their force to address this significant threat leaving only sixty men facing the *pa*. Volleys were exchanged before both sides closed and began conducting a bitter close quarter battle. As the British began to force the Kawiti's warriors back, a party sallied from the *pa* and quickly defeated the British rearguard. This necessitated the British to turn again and push Heke's men back to the fort. As the British soldiers were pursuing the withdrawing defenders, Kawiti again assailed their rear and was only forced from the field by British bayonets. At this point, the attacking force was exhausted and had one quarter of its strength.¹⁶ Hulme withdrew his force and the following day the British force returned to Kororareka.¹⁷ The Maori forces withdrew the same day, Heke returned to an old *pa* called Te Ahuahu while Kawiti established a new fortification at Ohaeawai.

Hone Heke occupied Te Ahuahu to reconstitute his forces after the battle at Puketutu. His force dispersed to their *hapu* to produce food and to conduct other economic tasks. Heke was out on a foraging expedition when pro-government Maori seized Te Ahuahu. Heke quickly reassembled his force however, his chief ally, Kawiti remained focused on the *pa* at Ohaeawai. The battle was conducted in the traditional manner with the Waaka Nene voluntarily leaving the defensive works to fight on an open field. The tactics used by both antagonists were the same as those that had been employed in the inter-tribal wars. However, Nene now incorporated the British technique of firing volleys at short range and was able to defeat Heke's numerically superior force. Heke

was wounded during the battle and almost taken prisoner however; nightfall prevented a pursuit by Nene.¹⁸

Governor Fitzroy saw Heke's defeat as an ideal opportunity to put a rapid end to the rebellion. A new offensive was mounted under Colonel Henry Despard, the Commanding Officer of the 99th Regiment and new overall commander of all troops and volunteers in New Zealand. Fitzroy's operational directive to Despard was simply the capture or destruction of Hone Heke and his followers. The commander quickly sought to address his lack of artillery by reconstituting four obsolete cannon from the Auckland ordnance depot. On 10 June 1845, the expedition departed for Kerikeri. On 16 June, after landing at the Kerikeri Mission Station and acquiring a bullock train for his artillery, the British force of 450 men began marching inland. The difficult terrain and limited mobility of the artillery stretched the advance out over seven days during which 200 pro-government Maori under Waaka Nene joined the force. On 23 June, Nene's troops in the vanguard established contact with Kawiti's forward security elements and drove them from a conical hill overlooking the *pa*.

In designing the Ohaeawai *pa*, Kawiti had introduced new features to mitigate the strength and determination of the British regular troops and the destructive power of the artillery. The first was addressed through the incorporation of salients and concealed firing pits into the design of the *pa*'s inner fence. The angles were small, as they were not intended to prevent the enemy reaching the walls but to destroy him at their base. To achieve this destructive fire, the defenders adopted the disciplined fire used against them in the previous two engagements and a five to six feet deep trench, which was dug inside the inner fence. The trench had a firing step, which allowed the defenders to load on its

floor before stepping up to discharge their weapon using purpose-built loopholes or through gaps in the fence timbers. Traverses were also built in the trench to prevent it from being susceptible to enfilading fire and smaller communications trenches were dug to allow the defenders the mobility to mass at the point of assault.

To mitigate the effects of the artillery the garrison built bunkers with overhead cover in which they would wait out bombardments. Called *rua*, these were pits large enough to hold fifteen to twenty men and roofed with timber beams with earth, stones and fern piled on top. Warriors entered through a narrow, circular entrance after which the bunker opened out into a room shaped like a gourd. The light outer fence was only intended to be a light obstacle that would delay and canalize the assaulting force. Flax matting hung from the fence approximately one to two feet from the ground, which enhanced the forts protection against musket fire as well as providing a level of operational security to mask the new inner palisade defensive structure. To maintain secrecy of the defensive innovations, Kawiti now ceased the usual open communication between the defenders, missionaries and pro-government Maori that occurred at Kororareka and Puketutu.

On 24 June, Despard began bombarding the *pa* with his artillery. His six and twelve pounder guns had little effect even when brought to within 200 yards of the fortification's outer wall. The firing expended 400 rounds and on 29 June, a frustrated Despard sent for a 32-pound cannon from the *HMS Hazard*. After its arrival, the larger ordnance was more successful however; a breach of the walls had still not been achieved when Despard assaulted the *pa* on 1 July. Throughout the preparatory fire, the defenders harassed the British forces through sniper fire and attacks on the gun line and foraging

parties. During one of these sorties, the rebel Maori captured a British flag, which was hung upside down from a flagpole in the *pa*. This enraged the British commander who immediately decided to attack without delay.¹⁹

Despard chose to conduct an attack against the northwestern corner of the *pa* as his force could approach under cover until within eighty yards of the outer palisade. Once out of the dead ground the assault force broke into double time to quickly reach the fortification's outer wall. The defenders unleashed a withering volley as the assault came to within twenty-five yards of the wall that stalled the attack's momentum. Despite this, the British troops reached the outer wall and successfully established a breach by tearing down the wall with ropes. Achieving this breach of the wall had left them exposed to fire from the flanking angles of the inner *pa*, as well as the trench directly to their front. The weight of defensive fire grew as defenders from other parts of the *pa* concentrated on this point. The design of the defenses left the assaulting troops virtually helpless in a killing area, unable to see let alone engage their enemy. A British survivor said:

Not a single Maori could we see. They were all safely hidden in their trenches and pits, poking muzzles of their guns under the foot of the outer palisade. What could we do?²⁰

The British soldiers sustained this fire for five to ten minutes before Despard ordered a retreat. By this point, forty percent of the attacking force had been either killed or wounded. One of the defenders later observed, "The soldiers fell on this side and that, they fell right and left like that, like so many sticks thrown down."²¹ After the battle, Despard decided to withdraw however was convinced to reconsider his decision by Waaka Nene. Despard took the night to decide whether he would accept Nene's advice to continue the attack by which time the defenders had left.

No fighting occurred for a period of five months after the battle at Ohaeawai. Both sides entered into peace negotiations, which were ultimately unsuccessful. The British mounted a large expedition against Kawiti's new *pa* at Ruapekapeka. The Maori again sought to inflict significant casualties on the British by encouraging them to attack another increasingly sophisticated defensive work. The seizure of this fortification was anticlimactic. The British attacked on a Sunday while Hone Heke and the Christian majority of the defenders were outside the rear of the *pa* conducting a church service. The attackers were met by a sleeping Kawiti and a dozen non-Christian warriors who were quickly forced from the *pa*. Maori attempted to retake the fort and were beaten off. They then attempted to entice the British to pursue them into the nearby bush with limited success. The Maori then withdrew to the *pa* of a friendly chief, Pomare²².

Mounting casualties and economic hardship became real incentives for the Maori to sue for peace. The Northern war had been an unusually protracted conflict in Maori terms and in October 1846, Hone Heke and Kawiti accepted the terms proposed by the New Zealand Government.²³

The Taranaki War

Maori reluctance to sell their land increased significantly in the period after the Northern War. The second major conflict of the New Zealand Wars, the Taranaki War began due to the Government enforcement of a disputed land sale. During the 1850s, the Atiawa tribe of Taranaki was split between a minority land-selling faction and the majority of the tribe which desired to retain their land. In 1859, a minor chief Teira offered to sell the Government 600 acres at Waitara. However, the senior chief, Wiremu Kingi, vetoed the sale. New Zealand Governor Thomas Gore Browne continued with the

sale aware that Kingi might resist but he believed it necessary to assert British sovereignty.

The Taranaki War began when Governor Gore Browne instructed the local garrison of the 65th Regiment to enforce a survey of the Waitara block. Wiremu Kingi's men disrupted the survey and forced the surveyors back to New Plymouth where martial law was declared.²⁴ The Governor immediately sent the remainder of the 65th Regiment under its Commanding Officer, Colonel C.E. Gold to stabilize the province. Gold's military objective was to achieve a decisive defeat of the Maori forces before the conflict could escalate. On 5 March, nearly 500 troops supported by small detachments of artillery, engineers and colonial volunteer cavalry marched into the disputed land at Waitara.²⁵

On 16 March, Wiremu Kingi and 70 to 100 supporters constructed a *pa* on the Waitara land. Kingi's intent was to employ the same strategy used by Hone Heke and Kawiti: avoid open battle with British, establish a strong defensive position and provoke the enemy to fight. The Waitara defensive works incorporated the features successfully used in the Northern *pa* fighting trenches, bunkers with overhead protection and communication trenches. Colonel Gold began the battle against the *pa* with an intense artillery bombardment from two 24 pound and one 12 pound howitzers and a naval rocket tube. The Maori conducted sporadic sniper fire from a distance but did not leave the *pa*'s protection. The artillery fired throughout the daylight hours with the guns propelling 200 rounds into the fortification. By dawn a breach had been opened, however, when the assault party of the 65th Regiment attacked the fort, they found the *pa* deserted.²⁶

Immediately following the 'battle', Kingi's strategy was interrupted by the operations in the north of the province by two small Taranaki taua who began raiding and plundering abandoned farms and killed at least one dozen settlers. This forced the British to suspend its pursuit of Kingi and deal with the greater threat to the civilian population. After minor skirmishing, the raiders were dispersed and the European focus returned to operations against the Atiawa. During the intervening months, allies had joined Kingi's force that was to have a considerable effect on British strategy, the Maori King Movement.

Throughout the 1850s, Maori leadership became increasingly concerned at the breakdown of the tribal system and began to look for ways to unify the race. Wiremu Tamihana, a chief of one of the Waikato tribes established the Maori King Movement after visiting England and observing the concept of a monarchy. The Movement, or Kingites, sought to unify the tribes under a single Maori King, Potatau Te Wherowhero, in order to provide a more efficient system of self-governance and ensure the rights of the Maori afforded by the Treaty of Waitangi were upheld. The Movement remained centered on the Waikato tribes primarily due to historical enmity that prevented previous enemies from joining the cause.²⁷ Members of the Movement had varying interests in joining the cause however; all were united in their opposition to the sale of land.

The intervention of the King Movement brought a new aspect to the war in Taranaki. Strategically it was something new for the Maori, a coalition of multiple tribes fighting as a single entity. The Atiawa saw the addition of warriors of the Ngati Maniapoto tribe from the Waikato as an opportunity to win a decisive battle against the British. For the British it was seen as a chance to destroy the Maori resistance, thereby

establishing European supremacy once and for all. Kingi returned to the strategy of drawing the British onto the offensive and forcing them to fight on a ground of his choosing. In June 1860, Atiawa and Ngati Maniapoto built a fortification at Puketakauere, one mile from, and in full sight of, the British field base, Camp Waitara. The *pa* threatened the lines of communication from the camp and restricted the freedom of movement of its garrison. On 23 June, a reconnaissance party approached the defensive works and was fired upon by the Maori. In response to this provocation, the commander at Camp Waitara, Major Thomas Nelson, sent a request to Colonel Gold for reinforcements and permission to attack the rebel position. Gold obliged with an additional 180 men and at dawn on 27 June, a British force of 350 men and two 24-pound howitzers deployed to assault the *pa*.²⁸

The Puketakauere *pa* appeared to the British commander to be a double *pa*, two fortifications built in echelon along a ridge. The position was flanked by steep gullies full of dense undergrowth on one side and a swamp on the other. Nelson's plan of attack was to divide his force into three parts in order to surround the Maori positions and prevent the enemy retreat. He formed a force of 125 men under Captain Messenger to secure the objective of the Puketakauere hill, as it appeared the more lightly defended fort, and provide support to Nelson's main attack on the Onukukaitara redoubt. To achieve this objective, Messenger's force was required to complete a difficult night march to be ready to attack at seven the following morning. The decisive operation was to be the assault on Onukukaitara. Nelson would personally lead the bulk of his force against the most prominent position while a third force of sixty men under Captain Bowdler remained between the *pa* and Camp Waitara to secure the open flank.²⁹

The British forces deployed into their attack positions without a problem, even Messenger's group who had arrived only moments before the attack commenced. The operation began with an artillery barrage that quickly created a small breach in the *Onukukaitara pa*. Nelson immediately ordered the attack and the main British force crossed the open ground towards the *pa*. During the advance, the assaulting troops were met with heavy fire from a large force of Maori occupying concealed positions outside of the palisade. The defenders had enhanced an area of dead ground to the immediate front of the *pa*'s outer wall through the construction of fighting trenches. The effect of this was equivalent to a spoiling attack as the British assault was focused on the fortification and taken completely by surprise. The defensive fire halted the advance but Nelson was able to hold his position hoping that Messenger's attack would enable him to continue his assault. The British commander was unaware that Messenger's attack had failed and his force was fighting for survival. Eventually with no sign of relief and his force continuing to sustain casualties, Nelson ordered a retreat back to Camp Waitara.³⁰

Messenger's troops had advanced to assault their objective and found it heavily defended by a large, entrenched force. Despite this dilemma, he continued with the attack. At first, it appeared he might be successful. However, his force soon began receiving flanking fire. The Maori followed this with a counterattack. Messenger's unit was broken into three groups that the Maori began to pursue. Messenger and a group of thirty men managed to move around the eastern flank of the Maori position and follow the withdrawal route of his commander. A second group fortunately got lost in the bush and hid before returning to the camp hours later. The final group was driven into a swamp and slaughtered.

The Maori victory at Puketakauere caused a significant number of Waikato warriors to support Kingi's cause. From a core of 70-100 warriors, his force now reached a peak of 800 men. This allowed the Maori to develop a semi permanent army based on a rotation system in which a portion of a tribe's strength remained committed to the war in Taranaki while the remainder undertook the necessary economic and sustainment tasks in their tribal lands. The government saw the defeat at Puketakauere as a disaster. Governor Gore Browne feared that the Maori success would lead to a general uprising of the tribes throughout the country. This demonstrated a lack of understanding of the natives, both in their objectives in the war and the relationships between the tribes. Gore Browne sent requests to Britain and Australia for reinforcements, which arrived under Major General Thomas Pratt the General Officer Commanding in Australasia. Governor Gore Browne gave Pratt the objective of decisively defeating the enemy in battle.³¹

With a force of 3500 troops, Pratt immediately sought to bring the Maori to battle and in accordance with their strategy, the Maori obliged.³² Kingi and his allies continued to construct defensive works in order to draw the British onto ground of their choosing. Against Pratt, this strategy lost its effect. The new commander was more circumspect and clearly understood the futility of directly assaulting a prepared *pa*. He used saps to close with the fortification's walls before establishing a breach and conducting an assault with limited exposure to the defender's fire. This technique removed the Maori ability to achieve their objective of inflicting the maximum amount of casualties. Defenders would sortie from the *pa* to harass the besieging force. However, these attacks achieved only limited success and a notable failure at Huirangi. Although successful at mitigating the offensive strength of the Maori fortification, Pratt's strategy was time consuming and

continued to allow the defenders to withdraw at will. The situation in Taranaki became a cycle of Maori defensive works, slow deliberate British offensive operations and Maori withdrawal. The Maori could not overcome the British sapping and British could not catch the Maori and achieve a decisive victory. Pratt and Gore Browne understood the stalemate existing in the province and sought to defeat the Taranaki rebellion by destroying their largest support base; the King Movement in the Waikato.

The Waikato War

In 1861, George Grey, a previous governor returning for a second term, replaced Governor Gore Browne. Grey immediately suspended the operation as he tried to reach a peaceful solution.³³ In March 1863, Grey led a force to reoccupy land held by the Maori as ‘hostage’ for the Waitara block. The advance met no resistance and Grey prepared to return the Waitara land. During the arrangements, a *taua* of *Taranaki* and *Ngati Ruanui* ambushed and killed nine soldiers at nearby Oakura. This attack combined with the perceived threat to Auckland led Governor Grey to revisit the plan to remove the King Movement. To support the invasion he requested and received 3000 troops from the British Government.³⁴ As well as troops from Britain, other units were from India, Ceylon and Burma to reinforce New Zealand. The preparations also included a vigorous recruiting campaign to add 2000 men from the goldfields of Australia and southern New Zealand.³⁵

The Waikato War saw a shift in strategy from the British. The new commander, Lieutenant General Duncan Cameron, developed a deliberate invasion plan directed at destroying the economic bases of the King Movement in the north of the province. The geography of this theater also assisted the British with its proximity to the main port of

Auckland, more open terrain and the Waikato River as a large capacity supply route. The resources allocated to Cameron allowed him to maintain his force in the field and conduct a continuous offensive campaign. He began the operation with 4000 men, which increased to a peak of 14,000 infantry in March 1864.³⁶ In May 1864, an artillery regiment, a battalion of the Military Train and the Naval Brigade were added to this force. Cameron was also able to use the Waikato River to provide greater mobility and firepower to his force. Armored barges were used to rapidly transport troops and paddle steamer gunboats were used to supplement the land based artillery. This ability to apply constant pressure on the Maori would prove to be more effective than the sporadic forays conducted in the previous wars.

Despite *taua* from fifteen of the twenty-six major North Island tribes, the Kingite army would only reach a peak of 2000 warriors.³⁷ The key abstainers were the powerful tribes of the *Nga Puhi*, who remained neutral throughout, and *Arawa*, who fought as part of the British forces. Even tribes who sympathized with the cause did not send men due to difficulty of supply, loss of the tribal labor force and increased vulnerability to British attack. Some of these 'neutral' tribes provided support as a source of vital supplies particularly ammunition to tribes in the theater of war.

The rotation system employed in the Taranaki war did not work as effectively in the Waikato due to the scale of the conflict being much larger than in Taranaki. While the King Movement was able to sustain the Atiawa during the Taranaki War, the reverse was not true in the Waikato. This meant the Kingite forces could only concentrate on specific activities and needed to disperse to their homeland to attend to domestic and economic affairs. The Kingite operations were conducted under two prominent Maori leaders:

Wiremu Tamehana and Rewi Maniapoto. Both men had established reputations as respected and competent war leaders and applied tactics learned from their previous experiences against the British.³⁸

The British forces quickly established the tempo of the Waikato War. By crossing the Maungatawhiri Stream in July 1863, they assumed an initiative that was not relinquished throughout the course of the war. The rhythm of the Waikato War became one of British action and Maori reaction. Each British initiative was designed to bring the Maori to battle and achieve a decisive victory. The method used to achieve this was to advance south along the Waikato River and force the Maori to defend their homes.³⁹ Maori sought to counter this by establishing defensive positions that blocked the British advance. In concert with this tactic, they began raiding British lines of communication and attacking settlers to force Cameron to dissipate his forces to maintain security.⁴⁰ The major battles of Meremere, Paterangi and Gate Pa proceeded in the manner of previous wars: the British assault, the Maori inflict casualties and withdraw before becoming decisively engaged, to establish a new position. In the two other significant engagements of the Waikato War, Rangiriri and Orakau, the British managed to achieve decisive engagement they desired however did not attain the results they had envisioned.

On 20 November, General Cameron conducted a joint operation against the Kingite *pa* at Rangiriri. His initial reconnaissance led him to believe that the fortifications were only a forward defensive line rather than a fort and the construction was incomplete. Cameron's plan was a pincer maneuver that involved the main British force conducting a frontal assault to capture the enemy's forward defenses while a river borne element landed to the south of the objective and attacked from the rear. After a preparatory

artillery bombardment supported by the river gunships, the attack quickly carried the forward trenches. The attack discovered that the enemy had occupied an unexpected central redoubt. Cameron launched three successive frontal assaults against the inner fortification and was forced to withdraw as night fell. The following morning the Maori hoisted a white flag to express a desire to discuss terms. The British quickly moved into the *pa* and demanded the defenders give up their arms, as they were now prisoners. The Maori were understandably upset at the British duplicity; however, they had no alternative other than surrender. Cameron had captured a Maori fighting force; however, it did not bring the rapid end to hostilities that he had assumed.⁴¹

The battle of Orakau was the last major engagement within the Waikato province. The local chief Rewi Maniapoto never desired to fight the British from a position at Orakau. Allies in his force became impatient with the Kingite defensive strategy and sought to take the war to the British. *Tuhoe* and *Ngati Raukawa* warriors established a *pa* only three miles from the British camp at Kihikihi. Maniapoto felt bound to support the warriors that had volunteered to fight in the war in his homeland and joined the garrison. The site was tactically weak. It had no water supply and could be easily surrounded. Upon arrival on 30 March 1864, the British forces immediately conducted a frontal assault and were repulsed. They then focused on encircling the *pa* before attacking again. The Maori garrison had repelled five attacks by 2 April and were running low on water and ammunition. The defenders then attempted to break the siege by penetrating the defensive cordon. Moving as a large group, to protect the women and children with them, the Maori broke out of the southeastern corner of the *pa* and succeeded in breaching the British perimeter.

A volunteer cavalry unit pursued the retreating column and in the open country soon created a rout. The Maori lost 120 warriors in the battle and Rewi Maniapoto lost his ancestral lands. Even with this limited success, the Waikato war continued.⁴² Tamehana and the bulk of the Kingite established a defensive line that the British considered too strong to assault and could not be outflanked. Attempts to besiege the fortifications were futile due to the inability to isolate the garrison. The Waikato War ended in a stalemate with neither side able to achieve a decisive advantage. However, the Government confiscated the land it now occupied. With the end of the hostilities in the Waikato, the British crown placed the responsibility for the security of the country on its own people and withdrew all Imperial troops apart from a small garrison force.

The *Hauhau* Wars

During the period 1865 to 1868, conflict occurred between the government and a new Maori religious movement, *Pai Marire*. The religion was created by the self-proclaimed prophet, Te Ua Haumene and incorporated a blend of traditional Maori beliefs and the Maori understanding of Christianity. The aim of the founder was peaceful opposition of dispossessing Maori from the land and strengthening Maori identity.⁴³ The movement became known as *Hauhauism* due to the cries the followers made during their devotions. After Te Ua's death in 1866, the more extreme members of *Hauhauism* began implementing a more violent means to achieve their objectives. The fanaticism of the *Hauhau* led them to employ suicidal tactics in battle. They pursued an offensive strategy and conducted frontal attacks against British redoubts. This may have been due to their strong adherence to traditional Maori beliefs. This is emphasized in their insistence for battles against pro-government Maori to be conducted in the traditional manner.

Although never a significant Maori resistance movement the small, dispersed groups of *Hauhaus* did present a threat to the security of settlers particularly on the west coast of the North Island. To defeat this unconventional threat the Colonial Defence Force developed the strategy of ‘bush scouring’ to destroy all pockets of support available to the *Hauhau*.

Bush scouring was envisioned as an amalgamation of the British military principles and the irregular skills of the Maori themselves. This tactic involved employing a column of a few hundred men trained to live off the land and equipped appropriately to hunt down the *Hauhau* in the bush and destroy the support bases in their villages. Members were recruited from the former military settlers and armed with breech loading carbines and five shot revolvers. The colonial military leaders were chosen for their boldness and ability to operate under extreme hardship and duress.⁴⁴ The tactic of bush scouring quickly dissipated support for *Hauhau* fanaticism and the movement ceased to be a threat. The *Hauhau* decline coincided with the rise of a new proponent of Maori resistance.

Titokowaru was known to the government an important peacemaker in the Taranaki province. He had advocated the acceptance of British peace terms including an area of land confiscated during the earlier war. When the government attempted to expand this area, Titokowaru’s *hapu*, *Ngati Ruahine*, were forced to either fight a war they had little hope to win or starve. Attempts at passive resistance failed and Titokowaru’s war began with the deaths of three settlers on 9 June 1868. From the beginning, Titokowaru understood the futility of his campaign unless he could gather a larger force. To counter the Colonial Defence Force’s bush scouring tactics, he would

have to assume the initiative and conduct his war in enemy territory. Many potential supporters were fearful of government backlash and required evidence by way of a military victory to bring them to the cause. With only eighty warriors, Titokowaru identified the need to draw the focus of the colonial offensive against his military force on ground of his choosing.

From the outset Titokowaru directed his efforts towards provoking an enemy attack against his bush stronghold of Te Ngutu o te Manu. His provocation strategy was twofold, through the use of letters and messages to agitate the political leadership and by raiding farms and ambushing road traffic to influence the will of the European population.⁴⁵ Settlers and the media pressured the government to halt the destruction of their homes and property. The Patea Force Commander, Colonel Thomas McDonnell, was forced into action by an attack against the redoubt at Turuturu-Mokai that left ten of his men dead. He immediately sought to attack Titokowaru's stronghold however bad weather prevented this until September.

At Ngutu o te Manu, Titokowaru employed an improvised version of the Maori tactics employed during the battle of Puketakauere. He created a credible defensive work, which drew the attention of the attacking force; however, he placed his defenders in concealed positions in the bush on the flanks of the clearing leading up to the *pa*. McDonnell with a force of 360 men sought to assault the fort from two directions. He maintained the bulk of the force under his command to conduct a frontal attack across the clearing while his loyalist Maori troops would move around the left flank of the *pa* and assault it from the rear. The defenders waited until the entire main assault force was in the clearing and then unleashed a heavy volley of fire. The colonial force was receiving

fire from all sides and as the soldiers sought cover, unit cohesion disintegrated. As casualties continued to mount McDonnell ordered a retreat and personally commanded the rearguard against a vigorous Maori pursuit.⁴⁶

Titokowaru's victory had the desired effect and he received reinforcement from surrounding tribes. His force remained small at approximately 200 warriors which ultimately meant he did not have enough forces to deal with the inevitable Government reprisal. Titokowaru saw no option, but the continuation of his current strategy in order to increase his combat power to defend against the anticipated Government offensive. He used this strategy effectively again at Moturoa and was poised to do the same again at Tauranga-Ika when his force suddenly dissolved and he retreated to the isolated area of Totara. The cause of the rapid disintegration of his military force is believed to have been Titokowaru's affair with the wife of an allied chief.⁴⁷ This act significantly decreased Titokowaru's mana, which caused his military partners to leave the cause. The disappearance of Titokowaru's threat effectively ended the last significant military operation of the Maori resistance movement. The Maori now chose political means to address the issues of sovereignty and land ownership.

Causes for warfare between Maori and the British Government were essentially the same as previously seen between the tribes. Land became a significant issue with the introduction of European social and economic institutions. The concept of land ownership was foreign to the Maori and misunderstandings with the implications of selling their land caused tension. This was compounded by the dubious intent of members of the New Zealand Company. *Mana* also remained a cause of conflict; however, it was manifested in the principle of sovereignty. Maori believed that retained the right to self-

governance under the Treaty of Waitangi. This afforded the New Zealand Government only nominal sovereignty over the Maori. As the Government attempted to introduce substantive sovereignty Maori saw it as a threat to their tribal rights and *mana*.

The basic strategy for Maori engagement of British forces was established during the Northern War. The necessity to avoid confronting a British force in open battle was validated by the heavy losses among the *Hauhau* during the 1860s. The development of the modern *pa* with concealed fighting trenches, anti-artillery bunkers and mutually supporting salients allowed the Maori to inflict significant casualties on the British forces while limiting losses of their own. The defensive strategy of provoking the British to assault fortified positions effectively mitigated the significant numerical superiority the imperial forces possessed. The Maori commander's ability to apply the lessons learned from one battle at the next, demonstrated a highly adaptive military mind. Tactically the Maori were equal to the British forces arrayed against them.

Strategically, the Maori suffered from a lack of unity that prevented them from acquiring sufficient forces to achieve a decisive victory over the British. A uniting of the tribes did not occur primarily due to historical grievances and different interests. This left the Maori unable to exploit tactical success or achieve a decisive result. The Maori desired endstate may also have contributed to limited nature of the New Zealand wars. None of the Maori resistance movements sought to expel the British from New Zealand. Most groups' aims were to ensure the rights promised to them in the Treaty of Waitangi were upheld and their grievances receive equal treatment by the government. Despite the inability of either side to achieve a decisive military victory, the overwhelming size of the British military defeated the Maori resistance. Its ability to pursue continuous offensive

operations against a force required to return frequently to support their families was a significant factor in overcoming the resistance movements. Despite the outcome of the New Zealand wars, the Maori performance during the conflict provides some interesting lessons for today.

¹George Clarke, *Notes on Early Life in New Zealand*. Walch and Sons Printers, 1903., 36

²*Ibid.*, 37

³*Ibid.*

⁴I.L.G. Sutherland, *The Maori Situation*. Wellington, NZ: Harry H. Tombs Ltd, 1935., 24

⁵Clarke., 39

⁶*Ibid.*, 36

⁷Sutherland., 23-24

⁸F.M. Keesing, "The Maoris of New Zealand: An Experiment in Racial Adaptation." *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.1, No.5, October 1928., 1-5

⁹David P. Ausubel, "The Maori: A Study in Resistive Acculturation." *Social Forces*, Vol.39, No.3, March 1961., 218-227

¹⁰Keesing., 1-5

¹¹Tom Gibson, *The Maori Wars*. London: Leo Cooper Limited, 1974., 26

¹²*Ibid.*, 28

¹³*Ibid.*, 31

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 38

¹⁵James Belich, *The Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict: The Maori, The British and the New Zealand wars*. Auckland, New Zealand: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989., 41

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 42

¹⁷Gibson., 42

¹⁸Belich.,46

¹⁹Gibson.,49

²⁰James Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars: A History of the Maori Campaigns and the Pioneering Period: Volume I: 1845-1864*. Wellington: R.E. Owen, 1955., 61

²¹Ibid., 64

²²Gibson., 63

²³Belich., 66

²⁴Gibson., 74

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Belich., 83

²⁷Gibson., 71

²⁸Ibid., 81

²⁹Belich., 93

³⁰Ibid., 94

³¹Gibson., 83

³²Belich., 115

³³Ibid., 119

³⁴Gibson., 104

³⁵Ibid., 102

³⁶Belich., 125

³⁷Ibid., 128

³⁸Ibid., 131

³⁹Ibid., 133

⁴⁰Ibid., 135

⁴¹Ibid., 146

⁴²Ibid., 175

⁴³Ibid., 204

⁴⁴Ibid., 213

⁴⁵Ibid., 239

⁴⁶Ibid., 242

⁴⁷Ibid., 272

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Ka pu te ruha, ka hao te rangatahi-The new net goes fishing, the old net is cast aside
-Maori Proverb

Over the seventy year period between first European contact and the end of the New Zealand Wars, Maori warfare developed new tactics and strategies in response to the introduction of firearms and to mitigate the advantages of the British Army. The causes that brought Maori to war remained constant. *Mana* was the most frequent cause of warfare among pre-contact Maori. The prestige of an individual or group could increase or decrease depending upon their actions. To not address a slight to one's *mana* was tantamount to cowardice. Individual clan groups would pursue military retribution for any insult seen as a slight to their *mana*. Warfare was conducted in a very ritualized manner and greatly influenced by traditional protocols that had to be observed to ensure a favorable outcome. Military operations would only begin after extensive deliberation and with the approval of the tribal majority. Once a cause for war had been validated, the injured party would then decide on an appropriate course through which to exact repayment. *Taua muru* was intended as a less violent option that allowed *utu* to be achieved with only limited damage inflicted upon the offending group. Despite this intent *Taua muru* often perpetuated the cycle of violence as its victim would believe the repayment exacted too high. The second option, *Taua toto*, was usually reserved for offences at the higher end of the scale as it sought blood vengeance against its objective. Regardless of the type of expedition mounted, it was intended to achieve a sole aim and return home.

The other primary cause of war in the pre-contact era was over land. Maori did not believe in land ownership. They did wish to exercise control over access to resources the land held. Initial Maori settlement occurred around coastal areas that possessed an abundance of resources for sustainment of the tribe. As the population grew, the resources in their area became insufficient to support the number of people dependent upon them. This caused clan groups to break away from their tribal groups and seek areas in which to establish a new community. This migration led to conflict over resources and land as group contact became more frequent. Warfare occurred between these displaced *hapu* with the victor possessing the land and the vanquished moving elsewhere.

Maori warfare in the period prior to European contact was characterized by campaigns of limited size and duration. Operations were conducted at short range by small forces over a short period of time. These factors were dictated by the primary military unit being based on the clan group and the vulnerability of these small forces when operating in enemy territory. Violent conflicts were limited to non-related neighbors and necessity to sustain the *hapu* precluded its labor force from a prolonged absence. The effect of casualties on the *hapu*'s survival also dictated the way that Maori fought their wars.

Pre-contact Maori emphasized stealth and cunning in war. The use of deception and treachery were encouraged in order to limit casualties on one's own side while achieving maximum effect against the enemy. False retreats and ambushes were preferred techniques and open battle only occurred if these could not be affected. To counter this tactic, the Maori placed heavy reliance on reconnaissance and security when at a state of war to prevent being surprised by its enemy. When pitched battles did occur, they

followed a strict protocol of challenge and counter challenge, individual combat between warriors seeking individual glory and finally general combat. Once a battle commenced it was more a large grouping of individual contests rather than a coordinated plan. Greater levels of organization did not appear until the musket's introduction.

With the European discovery of New Zealand and its use as a base for whaling and sealing operations in the South Pacific, the Maori were exposed to a new capacity for waging war. Initially the introduction of firearms into the Maori system of warfare did not provide a significant advantage to the group possessing them. However, the new weapons apparent supernatural effects did induce panic among their victims. Once this fear had been overcome, the small amount of firearms employed did little to affect a battle's outcome. Despite this fact, the Maori clearly understood the weapon's potential. The implementation of massed firearms by the *Nga Puhi* and *Ngati Toa* tribes initiated the first significant changes in Maori warfare.

Smaller tribes could now defeat a numerically superior enemy due to the overwhelming effect that ranged weapons had against men armed only for close quarter combat. Larger forces could be formed through the attraction of the weapons power or the threat of becoming a victim. These forces could also be transported over greater distances by engaging European assistance. Military campaigns could now contain multiple phases and be waged over a longer duration as the larger forces provided greater security in hostile territory. Command and control of these multi-tribal forces remained difficult, but a degree of coordination was now being introduced into battle. Basic fire discipline was introduced with volley fire used at initial contact before the opposing forces closed and conducted hand-to-hand combat. Early in the period much of the

ritualism disappeared as *taua* sought to exploit the surprise element of the new weapons. After a prolonged arms race among the tribes, the balance of power was eventually restored and the basic rituals were reinstituted.

Acquisition of firearms became the sole preoccupation of the Maori in the early contact period. Tribes sought to monopolize European trade in timber and flax in order to attain large numbers of muskets and to prevent their neighbors from doing so. This led to land possession assuming a greater importance. Tribal groups conducted expeditions to conquer land that provided more advantageous economic conditions. Land was used to produce goods for trade, which ultimately required a large workforce to meet the demands from Europe and Australia. When these wants could not be met by *hapu* members, the capture of slaves during battle became a source of labor. *Mana* retained its significance as a cause of war and *Hongi Hika*'s introduction of massed firearms was believed to have been to allow his tribe to exact revenge on a stronger neighbor. As the possession of firearms and the influence of Christianity became more prevalent, inter tribal warfare decreased as it became socially unacceptable and more difficult to achieve an easy victory.

Shortly after the inter-tribal wars, ended, large-scale settlement of New Zealand commenced under The New Zealand Company. In 1840, in response to the company's activity and French interest in establishing a colony in the South Pacific, the British Government formally incorporated the country into the Empire through the Treaty of Waitangi. Maori understanding of the treaty was that they retained the right of self-governance. Conversely, the Europeans believed the British crown held primacy. As the numbers of immigrants increased and contact with Maori grew so did tensions between

the races. Cultural misunderstandings over the meaning of land ownership and the unscrupulous practices of some land agents inevitably led to military conflict.

The New Zealand Wars began in the northern North Island over Maori dissatisfaction with the Government attempts to force substantive British sovereignty on the native population. The conflict flowed into the *Taranaki* province after Government enforcement of a disputed land sale. Maori unhappiness with the breakdown of their traditional tribal society due to European vices led to the establishment of the Maori King Movement. Initially tolerated by the Government it soon became seen as a challenge to British authority in New Zealand. The Kingites supported the *Taranaki* tribes in their war with the Imperial forces and was seen as the reason for the prolonged conflict in this area. In an attempt to destroy all Maori resistance, British forces invaded the King Movement's largest base of support, the *Waikato*. After the end of the *Waikato* War, Maori resistance became more limited in nature with uprisings in *Wanganui*, *Taranaki* and Poverty Bay occupying the Colonial Defence Force until 1872.

During the Northern War, Maori learned several lessons that established a basis for engagement of British forces throughout the New Zealand Wars. They quickly learned the advantages the British possessed in discipline and determination. After the first battle at *Puketutu*, Maori commanders were determined not to fight Imperial troops in open battle. This was a uniquely counter British tactic, as combat against pro government Maori was conducted in the same manner as during the inter-tribal wars. The Native commanders soon developed a defensive strategy in which they would provoke British forces to fight on ground of their choosing. To achieve this, defensive works incorporating concealed fighting trenches, bunkers and mutually supporting salients

would be constructed in positions that demanded British action. During battle, Maori would seek to inflict as many casualties as possible and withdraw before being decisively engaged. Throughout the New Zealand Wars, this tactic with only minor adjustment to account for British changes in operation allowed the Maori to achieve tactical superiority. An important part of the overall strategy was the effective use of propaganda and a good understanding of the enemy psyche.

It was at the operational level the Maori were found to be deficient. Their inability to establish a unified force meant that they continually fought at a numerical disadvantage of ten to one. Each theater of the New Zealand Wars was a separate Maori entity. The major tribe involved in each campaign fought primarily alone with historical enmity preventing significant alliances. The wars also highlighted the problems of seasonal force fighting a protracted campaign against a professional army. The Maori leaders were required to regularly disperse their army to allow them to conduct their social and economic responsibilities to their *hapu*. For example, the *Waikato Wars* showed the Maori system of war's inadequacy against a persistent enemy conducting continuous offensive operations. The greater resources of the British military allowed them to wear the Maori down to where the will to fight did not exist.

Although no side achieved a decisive military victory, it may be viewed that both sides achieved their desired objectives. The British military wore down the Maori resistance through persistent pursuit and prevention of a Maori confederation. Maori also achieved greater Government policing of land disputes and the retention of their sovereignty. The fact that a native culture could transform in forty years from primitive,

ritualized combat to tactically defeating a professional western army indicate there are some important lessons to be learned from the military efforts of the Maori.

During the New Zealand Wars, the British military underestimated the Maori ability to wage war. Maori continued to refine their tactics throughout the conflict, often applying the lessons learned from one battle in the next. The British were less agile in adjusting their operation not addressing the unique challenges of fighting in New Zealand until later campaigns. The British social biases did not allow them to consider the primitive Maori sufficiently intelligent enough to engage them in battle. This attitude also extended to the allied Maori whose advice on tactical matters was only accepted in the absence of any alternative. The same biases are evident in the operations today in the Global War on Terror where Coalition forces initially underestimated the enemy's ability to fight.

The belief that superior technology and military power would bring a quick victory by overwhelming an inferior, disorganized enemy has been disproven. Bias and a lack of understanding of the enemy prevent coalition forces from truly evaluating the merits of the enemy and local allies. The west perceives a lack of technology as a lack of intelligence. The converse may be more true. In warfare conducted in a society where a technological advantage cannot be achieved, a greater emphasis is placed on innovative thought and strength of mind. This would suggest that non-western enemy are harder to defeat as they continually seek to mitigate their deficiencies. This also highlights the weakness in the predictable western way of war.

British commanders believed the tactics employed in previous native uprisings would work as effectively in the New Zealand theater. Their assumption was that Maori

would surrender after their first experience of artillery and a professional army. Rather than capitulate the Maori acknowledged their enemy's advantage in these areas and sought to develop a strategy to mitigate them. The predictable nature of the British military allowed Maori to gain a good understanding of how the system worked and develop methods to counter it. The situation is much the same today where current enemies in the Global War on Terror have developed strategies to counteract the advantages of coalition forces. To address this, armies of the 'west' must become more dynamic in their application of new methods for waging war and seek to apply current solutions to current problems.

Throughout the New Zealand Wars, British commanders did not endeavor to understand the Maori and therefore could not exploit opportunities that would have brought a faster end to the wars. Only after several years of conflict did they develop a strategy that undermined the Maori ability to wage war. An earlier appreciation of the race would have allowed for a more effective plan from the outset. Western armies are fixated on finding a templated solution for every conflict and seek to put different theaters and adversaries into the same problem set. They believe that the tactics of the last war will win the next and primitive peoples will yield once they see the awesome power of the 'white man's magic'. This disregards the fact that each conflict regardless of similarities of terrain, technology or opponent is unique and should be viewed so. To pursue successful operations against a non-western opponent, commanders should study the culture, community dynamics and history of a theater as well as its terrain. The enemy studies us thoroughly. He understands the way the west fights and is well aware of

the vulnerabilities of our system to defeat him we must do the same in order to win our nation's wars.

Parker's five principles of the western way of war were applied against the Maori during the New Zealand Wars. The first three: a heavy reliance on technology, reinforced by discipline and the aggressive pursuit of the enemy's destruction were mitigated by the Maori through a thorough understanding of the enemy and tactical innovation. The fourth principle, the British ability to implement change was defeated by Maori superiority in identifying and implementing lessons learned throughout the conflict. However, in the final principle, economic power, the British had a significant advantage and it was to be this area in which the defeat of the Maori was achieved.

GLOSSARY

<i>haka</i>	aggressive dance performed as greeting or challenge
<i>hapu</i>	sub-tribe or clan group
<i>iwi</i>	tribe or tribal group
<i>kainga</i>	unfortified village
<i>mana</i>	prestige, influence, power
<i>pa</i>	fortified village, fortress or field fortification
<i>take</i>	cause or reason for dispute or war
<i>taua</i>	war party, military force
<i>toa</i>	skilled warrior or war leader
<i>utu</i>	repayment, satisfaction, restitution
<i>waka</i>	canoe

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